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AMERICAN WIVES AND OTHERS

That is why I say I am glad I am not an American husband.

AMERICAN WIVES AND OTHERS

BY

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'AMERICAN WIVES À LA MODE

AMERICAN WIVES À LA MODE

I AM glad I am not an American husband. At first sight this may appear a remark uncomplimentary to the American wife. It is nothing of the sort. It is just the other way about. We in Europe have plenty of opportunity of judging the American wife. In America you hear of the American wife, you are told stories about the American wife, you see her portrait in the illustrated journals. By searching under the heading "Foreign Intelligence" you can find out what she is doing. But here in Europe we know her, meet her face to face, talk to her, flirt with her. She is charming! . . . delightful! That is why I say I am glad I am not an American husband. If the American husband only knew how really nice the American wife was, he would sell his business and come over here, where now and then he could see her. Years ago, when I first began to travel about Europe, I argued to myself that America must be a deadly place to live in. How sad it is, I thought to myself, to meet thus, wherever one goes, American widows by the thousand. In one narrow by-street of Dresden I calculated fourteen American mothers, possessing nine-and-twenty

bright American children, and not a father among them—not a single husband among the whole fourteen! I pictured fourteen lonely graves scattered over the United States. I saw, as in a vision, those fourteen headstones of best material, hand-carved, recording the virtues of those fourteen dead and buried husbands. Odd, thought I to myself, most decidedly odd, these American husbands, they must be a delicate type of humanity. The wonder is their mothers ever reared them. They marry fine girls apparently, the majority of them; two or three sweet children are born to them, and after that there seems to be no further use for them so far as this world is concerned. Can nothing be done to strengthen their constitutions? Would a tonic be of any help to them? Not the customary tonic, I don't mean—the sort of tonic merely intended to make gouty old gentlemen feel that they want to buy a hoop; but the sort of tonic for which it is claimed that, if you poured three drops upon a ham sandwich, the next moment you would hear it—the ham sandwich—grunt.

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Also it struck me as pathetic, the thought of these American widows in their thousands, leaving their native land, coming over in shiploads, to spend the rest of their blighted lives in exile. The mere thought of America, I took it, had forever become to them distasteful. The ground that once his feet had pressed! . . . The old familiar places

once lighted by his smile! . . . everything in America would remind them of him. Snatching their babes to their heaving bosoms, they would leave the country where lay buried all the joy of their lives, seek in the retirement of Paris, Florence, or Vienna, oblivion of the past. Also it struck me as beautiful, the noble resignation with which they bore their grief, hiding their sorrow from the indifferent stranger. Some widows make a fuss, go about for weeks looking gloomy and depressed, make not the slightest effort to be merry. These fourteen widows,—I knew them personally all of them; I lived in the same street,—what brave show of cheerfulness they made! what a lesson to the common or European widow, the humpy type of widow. One could spend whole days in their company—I had done it—commencing quite early in the morning with a sleighing excursion, finishing up quite late in the evening with a little supper party followed by an inpromptu dance, and never detect from their outward manner, that they were not thoroughly enjoying themselves. From the mothers I turned my admiring eyes toward the children. This is the secret of American success, said I to myself, this high-spirited courage, this Spartan contempt for suffering. Look at them, the gallant little men and women! who would think that they had lost a father? Why, I have seen a British child more upset at losing sixpence. Talking to a little girl one day, I inquired of her

concerning the health of her father. The next moment I could have bitten my tongue out, remembering that there wasn't such a thing as a father—not an American father—in the whole street. She did not burst into tears like they do in the story-books. She said, "He is quite well, thank you," simply, pathetically, just like that. "I am sure of it," I replied with fervor, "well and happy, as he deserves to be, and one day you will find him again; you will go to him." "Ah, yes," she answered, a shining light, it seemed to me, upon her fair young face. "Mamma says she is getting just a bit tired of this one-horse place. She is quite looking forward to seeing him again." It touched me very deeply—this weary woman, tired of her long bereavement, actually looking forward to the fearsome passage leading her to where the loved one waited for her in a better land.

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For one bright, breezy creature I grew to feel a real regard. All the months that I had known her, seen her almost daily, never once had I heard a single cry of pain escape her lips, never once had I heard her cursing fate. Of the many who called upon her in her charming flat, not one had ever, to my knowledge, offered her consolation or condolence. It seemed to me cruel, callous. The overburdened heart, finding no outlet for its imprisoned grief, no sympathetic ear into which to pour its tale of woe, breaks, we are told; anyhow, it isn't

good for it. I decided—no one else seeming keen —that I would supply that sympathetic ear, and the very next time I found myself alone with her I introduced the subject. "You have been living here in Dresden a long time, have you not?" I asked.—"About five years," she answered, "on and off."—"And all alone?" I commented with a sigh intended to invite to confidence.—"Well, hardly alone," she corrected me, while a look of patient resignation added dignity to her piquant features; "you see, there are the dear children always round about me during the holidays. Besides," she added, "the people here are all so real kind to me, they hardly ever let me feel myself alone. We make up little parties, you know, picnics and excursions; and then, of course, there is the opera and the symphony concerts and the subscription dances. The dear old King has been doing a good deal this winter, too, and I must say the Embassy folks have been most thoughtful so far as I am concerned. No, it would not be right for me to complain of loneliness, now that I have got to know a few people, as it were."—"But, don't you miss your husband?" I suggested. A cloud passed over her usually sunny face.—"Oh, please don't talk about him," she said; "it makes me feel real sad, thinking about him."—But having commenced I was determined that my sympathy should not be left to waste.—"What did he die of?" I asked. She gave me a look, the pathos of which I shall

never forget. "Say, young man," she cried, "are you trying to break it to me gently? Because if so, I'd rather you told me straight out. What did he die of?"—"Then, isn't he dead?" I asked; "I mean so far as you know?"—"Never heard a word about his being dead till you started the idea," she retorted. "So far as I know he's alive and well."

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I said that I was sorry. I went on to explain that I did not mean that I was sorry to hear that in all probability he was alive and well; what I meant was that I was sorry I had introduced a painful subject. "What painful subject?"—"Why, your husband!" I replied.—"But why should you call him a painful subject?" I had an idea that she was getting angry with me. She did not say so, I gathered it. But I had to explain myself somehow. "Well," I answered, "I take it you didn't get on well together, and I am sure it must have been his fault."—"Now, look here," she said, "don't you breathe a word against my husband or we shall quarrel. A nicer, dearer fellow never lived."—"Then what did you divorce him for?" I asked. It was impertinent, it was unjustifiable. My excuse is that the mystery surrounding the American husband had been worrying me for months. Here I had stumbled upon the opportunity of solving it. Instinctively I clung to my advantage. "There has not been any divorce. There is not going to be any divorce. You will make me

cross in another minute." But I was becoming reckless. "He is not dead! You are not divorced from him! . . . Where is he?" I demanded with some heat.—"Where is he," she replied, astonished, "where should he be? At home, of course." I looked around the luxuriously furnished room with its air of cosy comfort, of substantial restfulness. "What home?" I asked.—"What home! Why, our home, in Detroit!"—"What is he doing there?" I had become so much in earnest that my voice had unconsciously assumed an authoritative tone. Presumably it hypnotized her. She answered my question as though she had been in the witness-box. "How do I know! How can I possibly tell you what he is doing! What do people usually do at home?"—"Answer the questions, madam, don't ask them! What are you doing here? Quite truthfully, if you please."—My eyes were fixed upon her.—"Enjoying myself. He likes me to enjoy myself. Besides, I am educating the children."—"You mean they are here at boarding-school, while you are gadding about. What is wrong with American education? When did you see your husband last?"—"Last? Let me see! No, last Christmas I was in Berlin. It must have been the Christmas before, I think."—"If he is the dear, kind fellow you say he is, how is it you haven't seen him for two years?"—"Because, as I tell you, he is at home, in Detroit. How can I see him when I am here in Dresden and he is in Detroit? You do

ask foolish questions. He means to try and come over in the summer, if he can spare the time, and then, of course—"—"Answer my questions, please. I've spoken to you once about it. Do you think you are performing your duty as a wife, enjoying your-

"You husband is working hard in Detroit."

self in Dresden and Berlin, while your husband is working hard in Detroit?"—"He was quite willing for me to come. The American husband is a good fellow who likes his wife to enjoy herself."—"I am not asking for your view on the American husband.

I am asking your views on the American wife—on yourself. The American husband appears to be a sort of stained-glass saint, and you American wives are imposing upon him. It is doing you no good, and it can't go on forever. There will come a day

"Pack up—you and the children—and get home."

when the American husband will wake up to the fact that he's making a fool of himself, and by over-indulgence, over-devotion, turning the American woman into a heartless, selfish creature. What sort of a home do you think it is in Detroit, with you and the children over here? Tell me, is the Ameri-

can husband made entirely of driven snow, with blood distilled from moonbeams, or is he composed of the ordinary ingredients? Because, if the latter, you take my advice and go back home. I take it that in America proper there are millions of real homes where the woman does her duty and plays the game. But also it is quite clear that there are thousands of homes in America, mere echoing rooms, where the man walks by himself, his wife and children scattered over Europe. It isn't going to work; it isn't right that it should work. You take the advice of a sincere friend. Pack up—you and the children—and get home." I left. It was growing late; I felt it was time to leave. Whether she took my counsel I cannot say. I only know that there still remain in Europe a goodly number of American wives to whom it is applicable.

ON BEING INTRODUCED

ON BEING INTRODUCED

CHARMED. Very hot weather we've been having lately—I mean cold. Let me see. I did not quite catch your name just now. Thank you so much. Yes, very nice man indeed. No, I'm only passing through." And a silence falls, neither of us being able to think what to say next.

What has happened is this: The editor of the ——— has met me in the doorway and shaken me heartily by the hand. "So glad you were able to come," he has said. "Some friends of mine here, very anxious to meet you." He has bustled me across the room. "Delightful people. You'll like them—have read all your books." He has brought me up to you and presented me. We have exchanged the customary commonplaces; and you are waiting for me to say something clever, original, and tactful! And I don't know whether you are Presbyterians or Mormons, Protectionists or Free Traders; whether you are engaged to be married or have lately been divorced.

A friend of mine adopts the sensible plan of always providing you with a short history of the person to whom he is about to lead you. "I want to introduce you to a Mrs. Jones," he whispers;

"clever woman. Wrote a book two years ago. Forgot the name of it—something about twins. Keep away from sausages—father ran a pork-shop in the Borough. Husband on the Stock Exchange. Keep off coke—unpleasantness about a company. You'll get on best by sticking to the book. Lot in it about platonic friendship. Don't seem to be looking too closely at her—got a slight squint she doesn't like noticed." By this time we have reached the lady, and he introduces me as a friend of his, simply dying to know her. "Wants to talk to you about your book," he explains. "Disagrees with you entirely on the subject of platonic friendship. Sure you'll be able to convince him." It saves us both a deal of trouble. I start at once on platonic friendship and ask her questions about twins, avoiding sausages and coke. She thinks me a most interesting man; and I am less bored than otherwise I might be.

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I have sometimes thought it would be a serviceable device if in society we all of us wore a neat card—pinned, say upon our back—setting forth such information as is necessary: one's name legibly written and how to be pronounced; our age (not necessarily in good faith, but for the purposes of conversation. I seriously hurt a German lady once by demanding of her information about the war of 1870. She looked to me forty. It turned out she was only twenty-seven. Had I not been an English-

man I might have had to fight a duel) ; our religious and political beliefs, together with a list of the subjects we were most at home upon, and a few facts concerning our career—sufficient to save the stranger from what is vulgarly termed "putting his foot in it." Before making jokes about Chamberlain, or discussing the South African war, one would glance behind and note whether one's companion was ticketed "Imperialist" or "Pro-Boer." Guests desirous of agreeable partners—"an agreeable person," according to the late Lord Beaconfield's definition, being "a person who agrees with you,"—could make their own selection. "Excuse me. Would you mind turning round a minute. Ah, 'Wagnerian Crank.' I am afraid we should not get on together. I prefer the Italian school." Or, "How delightful. I see you don't believe in vaccination. May I take you in to supper?" Those, on the other hand, fond of argument, would choose a suitable opponent. A Master of Ceremonies might be provided who would stand in the centre of the room and call for partners: "Lady with strong views on subject of female franchise wishes to meet with gentleman of sound, conservative principles." "Brewer of comfortable means desires introduction to lady abolitionist."

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An American lady, a year or two ago, wrote me a letter that did me real good. She appreciated my work with so much understanding, criticised it with

such sympathetic interest. She added that when in England the summer before she had been on the point of accepting an invitation to meet me, but at the last moment had changed her mind—she felt so sure—she put it pleasantly, but that is what it came to—that in my own proper person I should fall short of her expectations. For my own sake I felt sorry she had cried off: it would have been worth something to have met so sensible a woman. An author introduced to people who have read, or who say that they have read his books, always feels like a man taken for the first time to be shown to his future wife's relations. They are very pleasant. They try to put him at his ease. But he feels instinctively that they are disappointed in him. I remember when a very young man attending a party at which a famous American humorist was the chief guest. I was standing close behind a lady who was talking to her husband. "He doesn't look a bit funny," said the lady. "Great Scott!" answered her husband. "How did you expect him to look? Did you think he would have a red nose and a patch over one eye?" "Oh, well, he might look funnier than that, anyhow?" retorted the lady, highly dissatisfied. "It isn't worth coming for." We all know the joke that F. C. Burnand tells against himself of the hostess who, leaning across the table during the dessert, requested to know if he would mind saying something funny soon, because the dear children were waiting to go to bed. Chil-

dren, I suppose, have no use for funny people who can't be funny when they are wanted to be funny. I once invited a friend down to my house from a Saturday to Monday. He is a very amusing man, and before he came I dilated on his powers of humor —somewhat foolishly perhaps—in the presence of a certain youthful person who resides with me, and who listens when she oughtn't to, and never when she ought. He happened not to be in a humorous mood that evening. My young relation, after dinner, climbed upon my knee. For quite five minutes she sat silent. Then she whispered: "Has he said anything funny yet?"—"Hush, no, not yet. Don't be silly." Five minutes later: "Was that funny?" —"No, of course not."—"Why not?"—"Because —can't you hear. We are talking about old-age pensions."—"What's that?"—"Oh, it's—oh, never mind now. It isn't a subject upon which one can be funny."—"Then what's he want to talk about it for?" She waited for another quarter of an hour, then, evidently bored and much to my relief, suggested herself that she might as well go to bed. She ran to me the next morning with an air of triumph. "He said something funny last night," she told me. "Oh, what was it?" I inquired. "I must have missed it."—"Well, I can't exactly 'member it," she explained, "not just at the moment. But it was so funny. I dreamed it."

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For folks closely related to Lions, introductions

must be trying ordeals. You tell them that for years you have been yearning to meet them—that this is indeed a privilege. They then, at this point,

"They've put me next to my first wife."

have to explain to you that they are not *the* Mr. So-and-So, but only his brother or his father; and all you can think of to say is, "Oh, I'm so sorry."

I had a nephew who was a famous amateur bicycle champion—I have him still, but he has come down to a motor car. In sporting circles I was always introduced as "Shorland's uncle." But my case was not so bad as that of a friend of mine, a doctor. He married a leading actress and was known ever afterward as "Miss Blank's husband." At public dinners, where you take your seat for the evening next to someone you have possibly never met before and are never likely to meet again, finding conversation is difficult and dangerous. I remember talking to a lady at a Vagabond Club dinner. She asked me during the course of the evening—with a light laugh, as I afterward recollected—what I thought candidly of the last book of a certain celebrated authoress. I told her, and a coldness sprang up between us. She was the celebrated authoress. She had changed her place so as to avoid sitting next to another lady novelist. One has to change one's place sometimes on these occasions. A newspaper man came up to me once at the Mansion House. "Would you mind changing places with me?" he asked. "It's so awkward. They've put me next to my first wife."

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A troubled evening I had years ago was when I accompanied a young widow lady to a musical "At Home" given by a lady who had more acquaintances than she knew. My friend spoke first. "Say Mrs. Dash." The butler did not wait for

more, but shouted out: "Mr. and Mrs. Dash!" "My dear, how very quiet you have kept it!" cried our hostess, delighted. "Do let me congratulate you!" The crush was too great and our hostess too distracted at the moment for any explanations. We were swept away; and both of us spent the remainder of the evening feebly protesting our singleness. If it had happened on the stage it would have taken us the whole play to get out of it. Stage people are not allowed to put things right when mistakes are made with their identity. If the light comedian is expecting a plumber, the first man that comes into the drawing-room has got to be a plumber. He is not allowed to point out that he never was a plumber; that he doesn't look like a plumber; that no one, not a blithering idiot, would mistake him for a plumber. He has got to be shut up in the bath-room and have water poured over him just as if he were a plumber—a stage plumber, that is. Not till right at the end of the last act is he permitted to remark that he happens to be the new curate. I sat out a play once at which most people laughed. It made me sad. A dear old lady entered toward the end of the first act. We knew she was somebody's aunt. Nobody can possibly mistake the stage aunt—except the people on the stage. They, of course, mistook her for a circus-rider and shut her up in a cupboard. It is what cupboards seem to be reserved for on the stage. Nothing is ever put in them except the

hero's relations. When she wasn't in the cupboard, she was in a clothes-basket or tied up in a curtain. All she need have done was to hold on to something while she said to the hero: "If you'll stop shouting and jumping about for just ten seconds and give me a chance to observe that I am your maiden aunt from Devonshire, all this tomfoolery can be avoided." That would have ended it. As a matter of fact, that is what did end it, at five minutes past eleven. It never occurred to her to say it before.

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In real life I never knew but one case where a man suffered, in silence, unpleasantness he could have ended with a word,—and that was the case of the late Corney Grain. He had been engaged to give his entertainment at a country house. The lady was a *nouvelle riche* of snobbish instincts. She left instructions that Corney Grain, when he arrived, was to dine with the servants. The butler, who knew better, apologized, but Corney was a man not easily disconcerted. He dined well, and, after dinner, rose and addressed the assembled company. "Well, now, my good friends," said Corney, "if we have all finished, and if you are all agreeable, I shall be pleased to present to you my little show." The servants cheered. The piano was dispensed with. Corney contrived to amuse his audience very well for half an hour without it. At ten o'clock came down a message: would Mr. Corney Grain kindly come up into the drawing-

room. Corney went. The company in the drawing-room were waiting, seated. "We are quite ready, Mr. Grain," remarked the hostess. "Ready for what?" demanded Corney. "For your entertainment," answered the hostess. "But I've given it already," explained Corney; "and my engagement was for one performance only." "Given it! Where? When?" "An hour ago, downstairs." "But this is nonsense," exclaimed the hostess. "It seemed to me somewhat extraordinary," Corney replied, "but it has always been my privilege to dine with the company I am asked to entertain. I took it you had arranged a little treat for the servants." And Corney left to catch his train.

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Another entertainer told me the following story, although it was a joke against himself. He and Corney Grain were one summer sharing a cottage on the river. A man called early one day to discuss affairs, and was talking to Corney in the parlor, which was on the ground floor. The window was open. The other entertainer—the man who told me the story—was dressing in the room above. Thinking he recognized the voice of the visitor below, he leaned out of his bedroom window to try to hear better. He leaned too far, and dived head foremost into a bed of flowers, his bare legs—and only his bare legs—showing through the open window of the parlor. "Good gracious!" exclaimed the visitor, turning at the moment and seeing a pair

He leaned too far, and dived head foremost into a bed of flowers.

of wriggling legs above the window-sill; "who's that?" Corney fixed his eyeglass and strolled to the window. "Oh, it's only Whatshisname!" he explained. "Wonderful spirits! Can be funny in the morning!"

THE NEW FASHION IN LITERATURE

THE NEW FASHION IN LITERATURE

ON a newspaper placard, the other day, I saw announced a new novel by a celebrated author. I bought a copy of the paper and turned eagerly to the last page. I was disappointed to find that I had missed the first six chapters. The story had commenced the previous Saturday; this was Friday. I say I was disappointed, and so I was at first; but my disappointment did not last long. The bright and intelligent Sub-Editor, according to the custom now in vogue, had provided me with a short synopsis of those first six chapters, so that without the trouble of reading them I knew what they were all about. "The first instalment," I learned, "introduces the reader to a brilliant and distinguished company assembled in the drawing-room of Lady Mary's *maisonette* in Park Street, and much smart talk is indulged in." I know that "smart talk" so well. Had I not been lucky in missing that first chapter I should have had to listen to it once again. Possibly enough of it might have been new to me, but it would have read, I feel, so very like the old. A dear, sweet, white-haired lady of my acquaintance is never surprised at anything that happens.

"Something very much of the same kind occurred," she will remember, "one winter when we were living in Dresden. Only on that occasion the man's name, I think, was Robinson." We do not like

The bright and intelligent Sub-Editor.

new stories—nor write them, either. "Much smart talk is indulged in." There is absolutely no need to ask for more than that. There is a Duchess who says improper things. Once she used to shock me; but now I am too familiar with her. She is

really a very nice woman; she doesn't mean them; and when the heroine is in trouble, toward the middle of the book, she is just as amusing on the side of virtue. There is besides, a younger lady whose specialty is proverbs. Apparently, whenever she hears a proverb, she writes it down with the idea of seeing into how many different forms it can be made to go. It looks clever. As a matter of fact it is extremely easy. "Be virtuous and you will be happy." She jots down all the possible variations. "Be virtuous and you will be unhappy." "Too simple, that one," she tells herself. "Be virtuous and your friends will be happy, if you are not." Better, but not wicked enough. Let's try again: "Be happy and people will jump to the conclusion that you are virtuous." "That's good. I'll try that one at to-morrow's party." She is a painstaking lady. One feels that, better advised, she might have been of use in the world. There is a disgraceful old Peer who tells naughty stories, but is good at heart; and a very rude person. Occasionally a slangy girl is included; and a clergyman who takes the heroine aside and talks sense to her, flavored with epigram. All these people talk a mixture of Lord Chesterfield and Oliver Wendell Holmes, of Heine, Voltaire, Madame de Staël, and the late lamented H. J. Byron. "How they do it beats me," as I once overheard, at a music hall, a stout lady confess to her friend while witnessing the performance of a troupe of contortionists calling

"How they do it beats me."

themselves "The Boneless Wonders of the Universe."

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"It is at this gathering," the synopsis added, "that Ursula Bart, a charming and unsophisticated American young girl, possessed of an elusive expression, makes her first acquaintance with London society." Here you have a week's unnecessary work on the part of the author, boiled down to its essentials. She was young. One hardly expects an elderly heroine. "*Young*" might have been dispensed with, especially seeing it is stated that she is a girl. But maybe this is carping. There are young girls and old girls. Perhaps it is as well to have it in black and white: she was young. She was an *American young girl*. There is only one American young girl in English fiction. We know by heart the unconventional things that she will do, the startling, original things that she will say, the fresh illuminating thoughts that will come to her, as, clad in a loose robe of some soft, clinging stuff, she sits before the fire in the solitude of her own room. To complete her, she had an "elusive expression." The days when we used to catalogue our heroine's "points" are past. Formerly it was possible, the man wrote, perhaps, some half-a-dozen novels during the whole of his career. He could have a dark girl for the first, a light girl for the second, picture you a merry little wench for the third, and draw you something stately for the fourth. Nowadays,

when a man turns out a novel and six short stories once a year, description has to be vague. It is not the fault of the author. There is not enough va-

A charming and unsophisticated American girl.

riety in the sex. We used to introduce her thus: "Imagine to yourself, dear reader, an exquisite and gracious creature of five-foot-three. Her golden

hair of that peculiar shade——" Here would follow directions enabling the reader to work it out for himself. He was to pour out a glass of some particular wine into some particular sort of glass, and wave it about before some particular sort of light. Or he was to get up at five o'clock on a March morning and go out into a wood. In this way he could satisfy himself as to the particular shade of gold the heroine's hair might happen to be. Or, if he were a careless sort of reader, he could save himself time and trouble by taking the author's word for it. Many of them did. "Her eyes——" They were invariably deep and liquid. They had to be pretty deep to hold all the odds and ends that were hidden in them: sunlight and shadow, mischief, unsuspected possibilities, complicated emotions, strange, wild yearning. Anything we didn't know where else to put we said was hidden in her eyes. "Her nose——" you could have made it for yourself out of a penn'orth of putty after reading our description —it was so detailed. "Her forehead——" it was always "low and broad." I don't know why it was always low. Maybe because the intellectual heroine was not then popular. For the matter of that I doubt if she be really popular now. The brainless doll, one fears, will continue, for many years to come, to be man's ideal woman; and woman's ideal of herself for precisely the same period, one may be sure. "Her chin——" a less degree of variety was permissible in her chin. It had to be at an angle

suggestive of piquancy, had to have at least the suspicion of a dimple in it. To properly understand her complexion you were expected to provide yourself with a collection of assorted fruits and flowers. There are seasons in the year when it must have been difficult for the conscientious reader to make sure of her complexion. Possibly it was for this purpose that wax flowers and fruit, carefully kept from the dust under glass cases, were common objects in former days upon the tables of the cultured.

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Nowadays we content ourselves—and our readers also, I am inclined to think—dashing her off with a few bold strokes. We say that when she entered a room there came to one dreams of an old-world garden, the echo of far-off bells; or that her presence brought with it the scent of hollyhocks and thyme. In the case of the homely girl I don't see why we should not borrow from Mr. Pickwick's experience, and define her by saying that in some subtle way she contrived to suggest an odor of chops and tomato sauce. If we desire to be exact, we mention, as this particular author seems to have done, that she had an "elusive expression." A wise friend of mine, who knows his business, describes his hero invariably in the vaguest terms. He will not even tell you if the man be tall or short, clean-shaven or bearded. "Make the fellow nice," is his advice. "Let every woman reader be able to liken

him to her own particular man. Then everything he does and says becomes of importance to her. She is careful not to miss a word." For the same reason he sees to it that his heroine has a bit of every girl in her. Generally speaking, she is a cross between Romola and Dora Copperfield. His novels command enormous sales. The women say he draws a man to the life, but does not know much about women. The men like his women, but think his men are stupid. Of another famous author no woman of my acquaintance is able to speak highly enough. They tell me his knowledge of their sex is simply marvellous, his insight, his understanding of them almost uncanny. Thinking it might prove useful, I made an exhaustive study of his books. I noticed that his women were, without exception, brilliant, charming creatures, possessed of the wit of a Lady Wortley Montague, combined with the wisdom of a George Eliot. They were not all of them good women, but all of them were clever and all of them fascinating. I came to the conclusion that his lady critics were correct. He did understand women. But to return to our synopsis.

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The second chapter, it appeared, transported us to Yorkshire, where "Basil Longleat, a typical young Englishman, lately returned from college, resides with his widowed mother and two sisters. They are a delightful family." What a world of trouble to both writer and reader is here saved.

"A typical young Englishman." The author probably wrote four pages elaborating that youth. The Sub-Editor with four words presents him to me clearer. I see him positively glistening from the effects of soap and water. I see his clear blue eye; his fair crisp locks, the natural curliness of which annoys him personally, though alluring to everybody else; his frank, winning, boyish smile. He has "lately returned from college." That tells me that he is a first-class cricketer and a first-class rower. It doesn't tell me much about his brain power, I confess. The description of him as "a typical young Englishman" suggests more information on this particular point. One assumes that the American girl with the "elusive expression" is going to have sufficient for both. "They are a delightful family." The Sub-Editor does not say so, but I imagine the two sisters are like typical young Englishwomen. They ride and shoot and cook and make their own dresses. The third chapter is "taken up with the humors of a local cricket match." Thank you, Mr. Sub-Editor, I feel I owe you gratitude. In the fourth, Ursula Bart (I was beginning to get anxious about her) turns up again. She is staying at the useful Lady Mary's place in Yorkshire. She meets Basil by accident one morning while riding alone. That is the advantage of having an American girl for your heroine. Like the British Army: it goes anywhere and does anything. In chapter five, Basil and Ursula meet again, this time

at a picnic. The Sub-Editor does not wish to repeat himself, otherwise he would probably have summed up chapter five by saying it was "taken up with the humors of the usual picnic." In chapter six something happens: "Basil returning late one day, comes across Ursula Bart, in a lonely part of the moor, talking earnestly to a rough-looking stranger. His approach across the soft turf being unnoticed, he cannot help overhearing Ursula's parting words: 'I must see you again. To-morrow night at half-past nine. In the gateway of the ruined abbey.'" Who is he? And why must Ursula see him again at such an hour. In such a spot?

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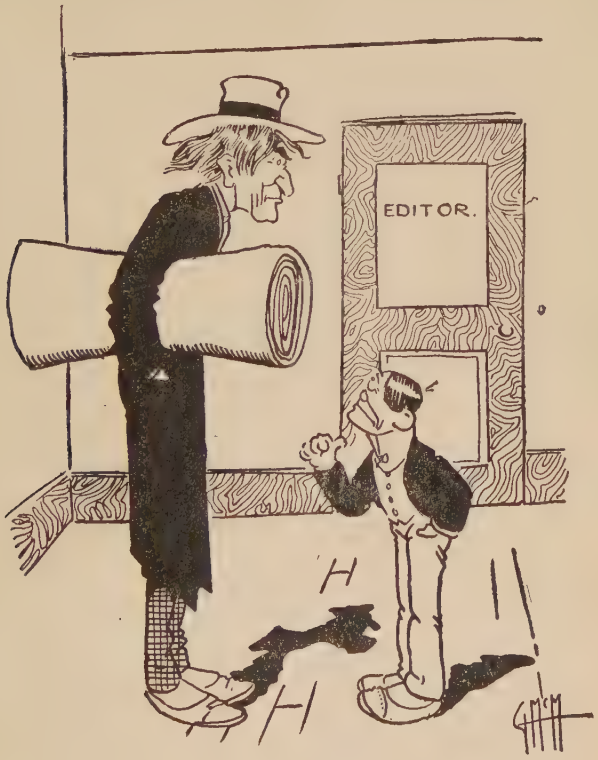
So, here, at the cost of reading twenty lines, I am landed, so to speak, at the beginning of the seventh chapter. But for taking the trouble to read it through for myself, my kindly guide, the Sub-Editor, has spoiled me. "You read it," I want to say to him. "Tell me what it's all about to-morrow. Who was this bounder? Why did she want to see him again? Why choose a draughty place? Why half-past nine o'clock at night, which must have been an awkward time for both of them—likely to lead to talk? Why should I wade through three columns and a half? It's your work. What are you paid for?" My fear is that this sort of thing will lead to a demand on the part of the public for condensed novels. What

busy man is going to spend a week of evenings reading a book, when a nice young Sub-Editor is willing in five minutes to tell him the whole history. Then there will come a day—I feel it—when the business-like Editor will say to himself: "What in thunder is the sense of paying one man to write a story of sixty thousand words, and another man to read it and tell it again in sixteen hundred. We shall be expected to write our novels in chapters not exceeding twenty words. Our short stories will be reduced to the formula: 'Little boy. Pair of skates. Broken ice. Heaven's gates.'" Formerly an author commissioned to supply a child's tragedy of this kind for, say a Christmas number, would have spun it out into five thousand words. Personally, I should have commenced the previous spring, and given the reader the summer and the autumn to get accustomed to the boy. He would have been a good boy; the sort of boy that makes a bee-line for the thinnest ice. He would have lived in a cottage. I could have spread that cottage over two pages: the things that grew in the garden; the view from the front door. You would have known that boy before I had done with him—felt that you had known him all your life; his quaint sayings; his childish thoughts; his great longings would have been impressed upon you. The father might have had a dash of humor in him. The mother's early girlhood might have lent itself to pretty writing. For the ice we would have had a

mysterious lake in a wood—said to be haunted. The boy would have loved o' twilights to stand upon its margin. He would have heard strange



What is to become of us writers?

voices calling to him. You would have felt the thing was coming. So much might have been done. When I think of that plot wasted in nine

words it makes me positively angry. And what is to become of us writers if this is to be the new fashion in literature. We are paid by the length of our manuscript at rates from half-a-crown a thousand words, and upward. In the case of fellows like Doyle and Kipling I am told it runs into pounds. How are we to live on novels, the serial rights of which to most of us will work out at four and sixpence. It can't be done. It is no good telling me you can see no reason why we should live. That's no answer. That's silly. I'm talking plain business, and what about book-rights? Who is going to buy novels of three pages. They will have to be printed as leaflets and sold at a penny a dozen. This thing is worrying me.

ON DRILLING AN ARMY

ON DRILLING AN ARMY

MY desire is to pass a peaceful and pleasant winter in Brussels, attending to my work, improving my mind. Brussels is a bright and cheerful town, and I think I could succeed if it were not for the Belgian Army. The Belgian Army follows me about and worries me. Judging it from my own experience of it, I should say it was a good army. Napoleon laid it down as an axiom that your enemy never ought to be permitted to get away from you—never ought to be allowed to feel, even for a moment, that he has shaken you off. What tactics the Belgian Army might adopt under other conditions I am of course unable to say, but against me personally this is the plan of campaign it has determined upon and carried out with a success that is astonishing even to myself. I find it utterly impossible to escape from the Belgian Army. I choose the quietest and most unlikely streets. I choose all hours—early in the morning, in the afternoon, late in the evening. There are moments of wild exultation when I imagine I have given it the slip. I can't see it anywhere; I can't hear it. "Now," I say to myself, "Now, for five minutes' quiet and peace," I have been doing it an

injustice. It has been working around me, that is all. Approaching the next corner I hear the tattoo of its drums. Before I have gone another quarter

The Belgian Army pursuing me with its exultant tattoo.

of a mile it is in full pursuit of me. I jump upon a tram. I travel for miles. Then, thinking I have shaken it off, I alight and proceed upon my walk. Five minutes later another detachment is upon my heels. I creep home, the Belgian Army pursuing

me with its exultant tattoo. I creep up into my room and close the door; the victorious Belgian Army marches back to barracks. It is too good for me. I confess it. My insular pride has vanished.

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If it would only follow me with a band! I like a band. I can loaf against a post, listening to a band, with anyone. I should not mind it so much if it came after me with a band. But the Belgian Army apparently doesn't run to a band. It has nothing but this drum. It is not even a real drum —not what I call a drum. It's a little boy's drum —the sort of thing I used to play myself, at one time, until people took it away from me, and threatened that, if they heard it once again that day, they would break it over my own head. It's cowardly going about the street playing a drum of this sort where there is nobody to stop you. The man would not dare to do it if his mother was about. He does not even play it. He walks along tapping it with a little stick. There's no tune, there's no sense in it. He doesn't even keep time. I used to think at first, hearing it in the distance, that it was some young *gamin* who ought to be at school, or making himself useful taking the baby out in the perambulator; and I used to draw back into doorways, determined, as he came by, to pull his ear for him. To my astonishment—for the first week—I found it was the Belgian Army, getting itself accustomed, I suppose, to the horrors of

war. It is making of me a "peace-at-any-price" man. They tell me that these armies are necessary to preserve the peace of Europe. For myself, I should be willing to run the risk of an occasional row. Can't someone tell them that they are out of date—with their bits of feathers and their odds and ends of ironmongery—grown men that have to be sent out for a walk accompanied by a tin whistle and a drum out of a toy-shop! I always think of them in connection with the White Knight out of "Alice in Wonderland." I take it that for practical purposes—to fight for your country, or to fight for somebody else's country, which is, generally speaking, more popular—the thing necessary is that a certain proportion of your people should be able to shoot straight with a gun. How standing in a line and turning your toes out is going to assist you under modern conditions of warfare, is one of the many things my intellect is incapable of grasping. In mediæval days, when men fought hand to hand, there must have been advantage in combined and precise movement. When armies were mere iron machines, the simple endeavor of each being to push the other off the earth, then the striking simultaneously with a thousand arms was part of the game. Now, when we shoot from behind cover, with smokeless powder, brain, not brute force, individual sense, not combined solidity, is surely the result to be aimed at. Cannot somebody, as I have suggested, explain to the military

man that the proper place for the drill-sergeant, nowadays, is under a glass case in some museum of antiquities.

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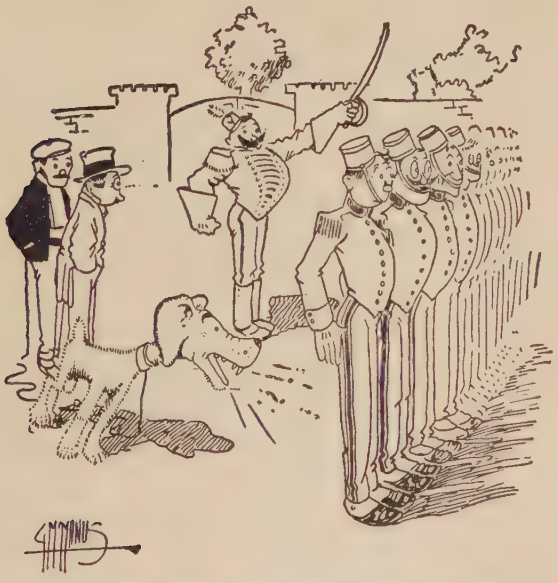
I once lived near the Hyde Park Barracks, and saw much of the drill-sergeant's method. Generally speaking, he is a fat man with the walk of an egotistical pigeon. His voice is one of the most extraordinary things in nature. If you can distinguish it from the bark of a big dog, you are clever. They tell me that the privates, after a little practice, can—which gives one a higher opinion of their intelligence than one might otherwise form. But, myself, I doubt even this statement. I was the owner of a fine retriever dog about the time of which I am speaking, and sometimes he and I would amuse ourselves by watching Mr. Sergeant exercising a squad. One morning he had been shouting out the usual, "Whough! Whough! Whough!" for about ten minutes, and all had hitherto gone well. Suddenly, and evidently to his intense astonishment, the squad turned its back upon him and commenced to walk toward the Serpentine. "Halt!" yelled the sergeant, the instant his amazed indignation permitted him to speak. The squad halted. "Who the [thunder] and [blazes] and [other things] told you to do that?" The squad look bewildered, but said nothing, and was brought back to as it was before. A minute later, precisely the same thing occurred again. I

really thought the sergeant would burst. I was preparing to hasten to the barracks for medical aid. But the paroxysm passed. Calling upon the com-

"Halt!" yelled the sergeant the instant his amazed indignation permitted him to speak.

bined forces of heaven and hell to sustain him in his trouble, he requested his squad, as man to man, to inform him of the reason why, to all appearance, it was dispensing with his services and drilling itself. At this moment, "Columbus" barked again,

and the explanation came to him. "Please go away, sir," he requested me. "How can I exercise my men with that damdog of yours interfering every five minutes." It was not only on that occasion. It happened at other times. The dog



"Columbus" barked again, and the explanation came to him.

seemed to understand and to take a pleasure in it. Sometimes, meeting a soldier walking with his sweetheart, Columbus, hidden behind my legs, would bark suddenly. Immediately the man would let go the girl and involuntarily proceed to perform military tricks. The War Office authorities ac-

cused me of having trained the dog. I had not trained him. That was his natural voice. I suggested to the War Office authorities that, instead of quarrelling with my dog for talking his own language, they should train their sergeants to use English. They would not see it. Unpleasantness was in the air, and, living where I did at the time, I thought it better to part with Columbus. I could see what the War Office was driving at, and I did not desire that responsibility for the inefficiency of the British Army should be laid at my door.

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Some twenty years ago we were in London passing through a riotous period, and call was made to law-abiding citizens to enroll themselves as special constables. I was young, and the hope of trouble appealed to me more than it does now. In company with five or six hundred of more or less respectable citizens, I found myself one Sunday morning in the drill-yard of the Albany Barracks. It was the opinion of the authorities that we could guard our homes and protect our wives and children better if, first of all, we learned to roll our "eyes right or left," at the given word of command, and to walk with our thumbs stuck out. Accordingly a drill-sergeant was appointed to instruct us on these points. He came out of the canteen wiping his mouth, and flicking his leg according to rule with the regulation cane. But as he approached us his expression changed. We

were stout, pompous-looking gentlemen, the majority of us, in frock coats and silk hats. The sergeant was a man with a sense of the fitness of things. The idea of shouting and swearing at us fell from him, and, that gone, there seemed no happy medium left to him. The stiffness departed from his back. He met us with a deferential attitude and spoke to us in the language of social intercourse. "Good-morning, gentlemen," said the sergeant. "Good-morning," we replied, and there was a pause. The sergeant fidgetted upon his feet. We waited. "Well, now, gentlemen," said the sergeant with a pleasant smile, "what do you say to falling in?" We agreed to fall in. He showed us how to do it. He cast a critical eye along the back of the rear line. "A little further forward Number Three, if you don't mind, sir," he suggested. Number Three, who was a stout gentleman, stepped forward. The sergeant cast his critical eye along the front of the first line. "A little further back, if you don't mind, sir," he suggested, addressing the third gentleman from the end. "Can't," explained the third gentleman. "Much as I can do to keep where I am." The sergeant cast his critical eye between the lines. "Ah!" said the sergeant, "a little full-chested, some of us. We will make the distance another foot, if you please, gentlemen." In pleasant manner like to this, the drill proceeded. "Now, then, gentlemen, shall we try a little walk? Quick—march! Thank

you, gentlemen. Sorry to trouble you, but it may be necessary to run—forward, I mean, of course. So, if you really do not mind, we will now do the

Why should not the sergeant address the new recruits politely?

double quick. . . . Halt! . . . And if next time you can keep a little more in line, it has a more

imposing appearance, if you understand me. The breathing comes with practice."

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If the thing must be done at all, why should it not be done in this way? Why should not the sergeant address the new recruits politely? "Now, then, you young chaps, are you all ready? Don't hurry yourselves; no need to make hard work of what should be a pleasure to all of us. That is all right; that's very good indeed, considering that you are only novices. There is still something to be desired in your attitude, Private Bullyboy. You will excuse my being personal, but are you knock-kneed naturally? Or could you with an effort, do you think, contrive to give yourself less the appearance of a marionette whose strings have got loose? Thank you, that's better. These little things,—they appear trivial, I know, but, after all, we may as well try and look our best——Don't you like your boots, Private Montmorency? Oh, I thought, from the way you were bending down and looking at them that perhaps their appearance was dissatisfying to you. My mistake. Are you suffering from indigestion, my poor fellow? Shall I get you a little brandy? Well, what's the matter with it, then? It's nothing to be ashamed of. We've all got one. Let it come forward, man. Let's see it." Having succeeded with a few such kindly words in getting his line into order, he would proceed to recommend healthy exercise. "Shoulder arms! Good, gentle-

men, very good for a beginning. But still, if I may be critical, not yet perfect. There is more in this than you might imagine, gentlemen. May I point out to Private Henry Thompson that a musket carried across the shoulder at right angles is apt to inconvenience the gentleman behind. Even from the point of view of his own comfort, I feel sure that Private Thompson would do better to follow the usual custom in this matter. I would also suggest to Private St. Leonard that we are not here to practise the sport of balancing a heavy musket on the outstretched palm of the hand. Private St. Leonard's performance with the musket is decidedly clever, but it is not war. Believe me, gentlemen, this thing has been carefully worked out, and no improvement is likely to result from individual effort. Let our idea be uniformity. It is monotonous, but it is safe. Now, then, gentlemen, once again." The drill-yard would be turned into a source of innocent delight to thousands, "Officer and gentleman" would become a phrase of meaning. I present the idea, for what it may be worth, with my compliments to Pall Mall.

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From the mound of Waterloo one can form a very good notion of what battles, under former conditions, must have been like. The other battlefields of Europe are rapidly disappearing, useful Dutch cabbages, as Carlyle would have pointed out with justifiable satisfaction, hiding the theatre of man's

childish folly. You find, generally speaking, cobblers happily employed in cobbling shoes, women gossiping cheerfully over the washtub on the spot where a hundred years ago, according to the guide-book, a thousand men, dressed in blue, rushed, like quarrelsome fox-terriers, against a thousand men dressed in red, and worried each other to death. But the plan of Waterloo is little changed. The guide—whose grandfather was present at the battle, so he always tells you—can point out to you the ground across which every charge was delivered, can show you every ridge, still existing, behind which the infantry crouched. The whole business was begun and finished within a space little larger than a square mile. One can understand the advantage to be derived, then, from the perfect moving of the military machine, the uses of the echelon, the purposes of the linked battalions, the manipulation of centre, left wing, and right wing. Then it may have been worth while—if war be ever worth the while, which grown men of sense are beginning to doubt—to waste two years of a soldier's training teaching him the goose-step. In the twentieth century, teaching soldiers the evolutions of the Thirty Years' War is about as sensible as it would be loading our ironclads with canvas. I once followed a company of volunteers across Blackfriars Bridge on their way from Southwark to the Temple. At the bottom of Ludgate Hill the commanding officer, a young but conscientious gentleman, ordered "Left wheel!"

At once the vanguard turned down a narrow alley—I forgot its name—which would have led the troop into the purlieus of Whitefriars, where, in all probability, they would have been lost forever. The whole troop had to be halted, right-about-faced, and marched back a hundred yards. Then the order "Quick march!" was given. The vanguard shot across Ludgate Circus and were making for the Meat Market. At this point that young commanding officer gave up being a military man and talked sense. "Not that way," he shouted, "up Fleet Street." And without further trouble the army of the future went upon its way.

RUSSIANS AS I KNOW THEM

RUSSIANS AS I KNOW THEM

I OUGHT to like Russia better than I do, if only for the sake of the many good friends I am proud to possess among the Russians. I always keep on my mantelpiece a large square photograph. It helps me to maintain my head at that degree of distention necessary for the performance of all literary work. It presents in the centre a neatly written address in excellent English, that I frankly confess I am never tired of reading, around which are ranged some hundreds of names I am quite unable to read; but which, in spite of their strange lettering, I know to be those of good Russian men and women to whom, a year or two ago, the kindly idea occurred to send me a Christmas card, this message of encouragement. The individual Russian is one of the most charming creatures living. If he likes you he does not hesitate to let you know it; not only by every kindly action possible, but, by what perhaps is just as useful in this gray old world,—kindly speech. We Anglo-Saxons are apt to pride ourselves upon being undemonstrative. Max Adler tells a tale of a boy who was sent out by his father to fetch in some wood. The boy took the opportunity of disappearing, and did not show his face again beneath the paternal roof

for over twenty years. Then, one evening, a smiling, well-dressed stranger entered to the old couple and announced himself as their long-lost child. "Well, you haven't hurried yourself," grumbled the old man, "and blarm me, if now you haven't forgotten the wood!" I was lunching with an Englishman in a London restaurant one day. A man entered and took his seat at a table near by, and glancing around, and meeting my friend's eyes, smiled and nodded. "Excuse me a minute," said my friend, "I must just speak to my brother—haven't seen him for over five years." He finished his soup and leisurely wiped his moustache before strolling across and shaking hands. They talked for a while, then my friend returned to me. "Never thought to see him again," observed my friend; "he was one of the garrison at that place in Africa—what's the name of it? . . . that the Mahdi attacked. Only three of them escaped. Always was a lucky beggar, Jim!"—"But wouldn't you like to talk to him some more?" I suggested. "I can see you any time about this little business of ours."—"Oh, that's all right," he answered, "we have just fixed it up—shall be dining with him tomorrow."

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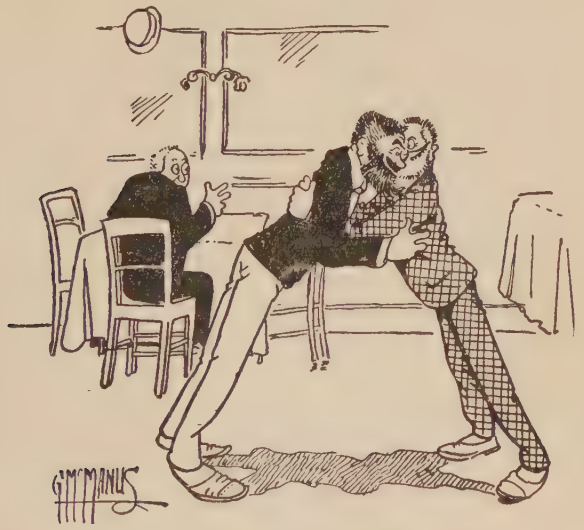
I thought of this scene one evening while dining with some Russian friends in a St. Petersburg hotel. One of the party had not seen his second cousin, a mining engineer, for nearly eighteen months. They

sat opposite to each other, and a dozen times at least during the course of the dinner one of them would jump up from his chair and run round to em-



Would run round to embrace his cousin, kissing the other on both cheeks.

brace his cousin, kissing the other on both cheeks, and then sitting down again with moist eyes. Their behavior excited no astonishment whatever among their fellow countrymen. The Russian's anger is just as quick and vehement as his love. I was supping one evening with friends in one of the chief restaurants on the Nevsky. Two gentlemen at an adjoining table, who up till the previous

moment had been engaged in amicable conversation, suddenly sprang to their feet and "went for" each other. One man secured the water-bottle, which he promptly broke over his companion's head. His opponent chose for his weapon a heavy mahogany chair, and, leaping back for the purpose of securing a good swing, lurched against my hostess. "Do please be careful," said the lady. "A thousand pardons, madame," returned the stranger, from whom blood and water were streaming in equal copiousness; and, taking the utmost care to avoid interfering with our comfort, he succeeded adroitly in flooring his antagonist by a well-directed blow. A policeman appeared upon the scene with marvellous promptitude. He did not attempt to interfere, but, running out into the street, communicated the glad tidings to another policeman. "That's going to cost them a pretty penny," observed my host, who was calmly continuing his supper; "why couldn't they wait?" It did cost them a pretty penny. Some half-a-dozen policemen were around before as many minutes had elapsed, and each one claimed his bribe. Then they wished both combatants good-night and trooped out, evidently in great good humor; and the two gentlemen, with wet napkins around their heads, sat down again, and laughter and amicable conversation flowed freely as before.

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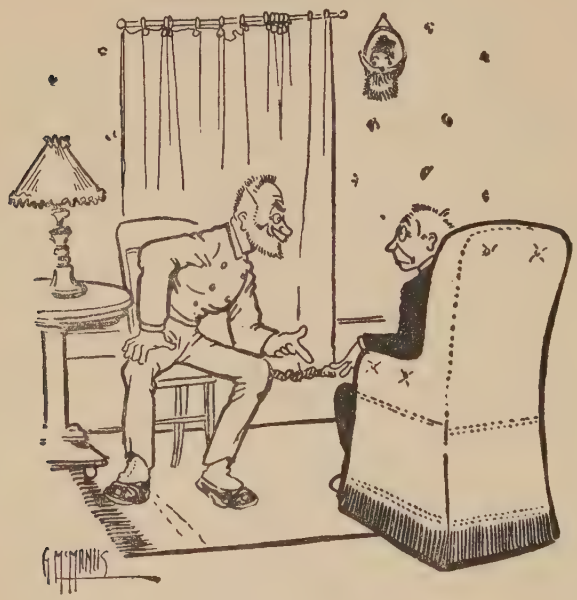
They strike the stranger as a child-like people, but

you are possessed with a haunting sense of ugly traits beneath. The workers—slaves it would be almost more just to call them—allow themselves to be driven with the uncomplaining patience of intelligent animals. Yet every educated Russian you talk to on the subject knows that revolution is coming. But he talks to you about it with the door shut, for no man in Russia can be sure that his own servants are not police spies. I was discussing the question with a Russian official one evening in his study when his old housekeeper entered the room—a soft-eyed, gray-haired woman who had been in his service over eight years, and whose position in the household was almost that of a friend. He stopped abruptly and changed the conversation. As soon as the door was closed behind her again, he explained himself. "It is better to chat upon such matters when one is quite alone," he laughed. "But surely you can trust her," I said. "It is safer to trust no one," he answered. And then he continued from the point where he had been interrupted. "It is gathering," he said; "there are times when I almost smell blood in the air. I am an old man and may escape it, but my children will have to suffer—suffer as children do for the sins of their fathers. We have made brute beasts of the people, and as brute beasts they will come upon us, cruel and undiscriminating: right and wrong indifferently going down before them. But it has to be. It is needed." The future history of Russia will be the history of the

French Revolution over again, but with this difference: that the educated classes, the thinkers, who are pushing forward the dumb masses, are doing so



"It is safer to trust no one."

with their eyes open. There will be no Mirabeau, no Danton to be appalled at the people's ingratitude. The men who to-day are working for revolution in Russia number among their ranks statesmen, soldiers, delicately nurtured women, rich landowners, prosperous tradesmen, students familiar with the lessons of history. They have no miscon-

ceptions concerning the blind Frankenstein into which they are breathing life. He will crush them, —they know it; but with them he will crush the injustice and stupidity they have grown to hate better than they love themselves. The Russian peasant, when he rises, will prove more terrible, more pitiless than were the men of 1790. He is less intelligent, more brutal. They sing a wild, sad song, these Russian cattle, the while they work. They sing it in chorus on the quays while hauling the cargo, they sing it in the factory, they chant it on the weary endless steppes, reaping the corn they may not eat. It is about the good time their masters are having—of the feasting and the merry-making. But the last line of every verse is the same. When you ask a Russian to translate it for you he shrugs his shoulders. "Oh, it means," he says, "that their time will come some day!" It is a sad, pathetic, haunting refrain. They sing it in the drawing-rooms of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and somehow the light talk and laughter die away, and a hush, like a chill breath, enters by the closed door and passes through. It is a curious song, like the wailing of a tired wind, and one day it will sweep over the land heralding terror.

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A Scotchman I met in Russia told me that when he first came out to act as manager of a large factory just outside of St. Petersburg, belonging to his Scottish employers, he unwittingly made a mistake

the first week when paying his work-people. By a miscalculation of the Russian money he paid some three hundred men each one nearly a ruble short. He discovered his error before the following Saturday and then put the matter right. The men accepted his explanation with perfect composure and without any comment whatever. The thing astonished him. "But you must have known I was paying you short," he said to one of them. "Why didn't you tell me of it?" "Oh," answered the man, "we thought you were putting it in your own pocket, and that if we had complained it would only have meant dismissal for us. No one would have taken our word against yours." Corruption appears to be so general throughout the whole of Russia that all classes have come to accept it as part of the established order of things. A friend gave me a little dog to bring away with me. It was a valuable animal, and I wished to keep it with me. It is strictly forbidden to take dogs into railway carriages. The list of the pains and penalties for doing so frightened me considerably. "Oh, that will be all right," my friend assured me, "have a few rubles loose in your pocket." I tipped the station-master and I tipped the guard, and started, pleased with myself. But I had not anticipated what was in store for me. The news that an Englishman with a dog in a basket and rubles in his pocket was coming must have been telegraphed all down the line. At almost every stopping-place some enormous official, gener-

ally wearing a sword and a helmet, boarded the train. At first these fellows terrified me. I took them for field-marshals at least. When they saw

He shook me warmly by the hand.

the dog their astonishment was boundless. Visions of Siberia crossed my mind. Anxious and trembling, I gave the first one a gold piece. He shook me warmly by the hand. I thought he was going to kiss me. If I had offered him my cheek I am sure

he would have done so. With the next one I felt less apprehensive. For a couple of rubles he blessed me,—so I gathered,—and, commending me to the care of the Almighty, departed. Before I had reached the German frontier I was giving away the equivalent of English sixpences to men with the bearing and carriage of major-generals; and to see their faces brighten up and to receive their heart-felt benedictions was well worth the money.

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But to the man without rubles in his pocket Russian officialdom is not so gracious. By the expenditure of a few more coins I got my dog through the Customs without trouble, and had leisure to look about me. A miserable object was being badgered by half-a-dozen men in uniform, he —his lean face puckered up into a snarl—returning them snappish answers: the whole scene suggesting some half-starved mongrel worried by schoolboys. A slight informality had been discovered in his passport, so a fellow traveller with whom I had made friends informed me. He had no rubles in his pocket, and in consequence they were sending him back to St. Petersburg—some eighteen hours' journey, in a carriage that an English magistrate would fine a butcher for transporting oxen in. It seemed a good joke to Russian officialdom; they would drop in every now and then, look at him, as he sat crouched in a corner of the waiting-room, and pass out again, laughing. The snarl had died from

his face; a dull, listless indifference had taken its place—the look one sees on the face of a beaten dog, after the beating is over, when it is lying very still,

By the expenditure of a few more coins I got my dog through the Customs.

its great eyes staring into nothingness, and one wonders whether it is thinking. The Russian worker reads no newspaper, has no club, yet all things seem to be known to him. There is a prison on the banks of the Neva, in St. Petersburg. They say such things are done with now, but up till very recently

there existed a small cell therein, below the level of the ice, and prisoners placed there would be found missing a day or two afterward, nothing ever again known of them, except, perhaps, to the fishes of the Baltic. They talk of all these things among themselves: the sleigh-drivers around their charcoal fire; the field-workers going and coming through the gray light; the factory-workers, their whispers deadened by the rattle of the looms.

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I was searching for a house in Brussels two winters ago, and there was one I went over in a small street leading out of the Avenue Louise. It was poorly furnished, but rich in pictures large and small. They covered the walls of every room. "These," the landlady—an elderly, haggard-looking woman—explained to me, "will not be left, I am taking them with me to London. They are my husband's. He is arranging an exhibition." The friend who had sent me had told me the woman was a widow who had been living in Brussels eking out a precarious existence as a lodging-house keeper for the last ten years. "You have married again?" I questioned her. The woman smiled. "Not again. I was married eighteen years ago, in Russia. My husband was transported to Siberia a few days after we were married, and I have never seen him since. I should have followed him," she explained, "only every year we thought he was going to be set free." "He is really free now?" I asked. "Yes,"

she answered, "they set him free last week. He will join me in London. We shall be able to finish our honeymoon," she added with another smile. I read in the English papers of the Exhibition in London. It was said the artist showed much promise, and possibly a career may be opening out for him.

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It is a fascinating subject, Russia. But for a wholesome fear of my editor, I feel I could ramble on for columns. Nature has made life hard there for rich and poor alike. To the banks of the Neva, with its ague- and influenza-bestowing fogs and mists, one imagines that the Devil himself must have guided Peter the Great. "Show me in all my dominions the most hopelessly unattractive site on which to build a city," Peter must have prayed; and the Devil, having discovered the site on which St. Petersburg now stands, must have returned to his master in high good feather. "I think, my dear Peter, I have found you something really unique. It is a pestilent swamp to which a mighty river brings bitter blasts and marrow-chilling fogs. In the brief summer time the wind will bring you sand. In this way you will combine the disadvantages of the North Pole with those of the desert of Sahara." In the winter time the Russians light their great stoves and doubly barricade their doors and windows; and in this atmosphere, like that of a greenhouse, many of their women will pass six months,

never venturing out of doors. Even the men only go out at intervals. Every office, every shop is an oven. Men of forty have white hair and parchment faces, and the women are old at thirty. The farm laborers, during the few summer months, work almost entirely without sleep. They leave that for the winter, when they shut themselves up like dormice in their hovels, their store of food and vodka buried underneath the floor. For days together they sleep, then wake and dig, then sleep again. So it is even with their betters. The Russian party lasts all night. In an adjoining room are beds and couches; half a dozen guests are always sleeping. An hour contents them, then they rejoin the company and other guests take their places. The Russian eats when he feels so disposed; the table is always spread, the guests come and go. Once a year there is a great feast in Moscow. The Russian merchant and his friends sit down early in the day, and a sort of thick, sweet pancake is served up hot. The feast continues for many hours, and the ambition of the Russian merchant is to eat more than his neighbor. Fifty or sixty of these hot cakes a man will consume at a sitting, and a dozen funerals in Moscow is often the result. An uncivilized people, we call them in our lordly way, but they are young. They will see us out, I am inclined to think. Their energy, their intelligence—when these show above the groundwork and their animalism—are monstrous. I have known a Russian to learn Chinese

within six months. English! they learn it while you are talking to them. The children play at chess and study the violin for their own amusement. The world will be glad of Russia,—when she has put her house in order.

BABIES AND BIRDS

BABIES AND BIRDS

I AM chary nowadays of offering counsel in connection with subjects concerning which I am not and cannot be an authority. Long ago I once took upon myself to write a paper about babies. It did not aim to be a text-book upon the subject. It did not even claim to exhaust the topic. I was willing that others, coming after me, should continue the argument—that is, if upon reflection they were still of opinion there was anything more to be said. I was pleased with the article. I went out of my way to obtain an early copy of the magazine in which it appeared, on purpose to show it to a lady friend of mine. She was the possessor of one or two babies of her own—specimens in no way remarkable, though she herself, as was natural enough, did her best to boom them. I thought it might be helpful to her; the views and observations, not of a rival fancier, who would be prejudiced, but of an intelligent amateur. I put the magazine into her hands, opened at the proper place. "Read it through carefully and quietly," I said; "don't let anything distract you. Have a pencil and a bit of paper ready at your side, and note down any points upon which you would like further information. If there is anything you think I have missed, let

me know. It may be that here and there you will be disagreeing with me; if so, do not hesitate to mention it; I shall not be angry. If a demand arise, I shall very likely issue an enlarged and improved edition of this paper in the form of a pamphlet; in which case hints and suggestions that to you may appear almost impertinent will be of distinct help to me."—"I haven't got a pencil," she said. "What's it all about?"—"It's about babies," I explained.

I lent her a pencil. (That is another thing I've learned. Never lend a pencil to a woman if you ever want to see it back again. She has three answers to your request for its return. The first: that she gave it back to you, and that you put it in your pocket, and that it's there now; that if it isn't it ought to be. The second: that you never lent it to her. The third: that she wishes people would not lend her pencils and then clamor for them back again, just when she has something else far more important to think about.)

"What do you know about babies?" she demanded. "If you will read the paper," I replied, "you will see for yourself. It's all there." She flicked over the pages contemptuously. "There doesn't seem much of it," she retorted. "It is condensed," I pointed out to her. "I am glad it is short. All right, I'll read it," she agreed. I thought my presence might disturb her, so went out into the garden. I wanted her to get the full benefit of it. I crept back now and again to peep through

the window. She did not seem to be making many notes. But I heard her making little noises to herself. When I saw she had reached the last page, I re-entered the room. "Well?" I said. "Is it meant to be funny?" she demanded, "or is it intended to be taken seriously?"—"There may be flashes of humor here and there——" She did not wait to let me finish. "Because, if it's meant to be funny," she said, "I don't think it is at all funny. And if it is intended to be serious, there's one thing very clear, and that is that you are not a mother!"

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With the unerring instinct of a born critic she had divined my one weak point. Other objections raised against me I could have met. But that one stinging reproach was unanswerable. It has made me, as I explained, chary of tendering advice on matters outside my own department of life. Otherwise, at this period of the year, there is much that I should like to say to my good friends, the birds. I want to put it to them seriously. Is not the month of February just a little too early? Of course their answer will be the same as in the case of my motherly friend. "Oh, what do you know about it; you are not a bird." I know I am not a bird, but that is the very reason why they should listen to me. I bring a fresh mind to bear upon the subject. I am not tied down by bird convention. February, my dear friends—in these northern climes of ours, at all events—is much too early. You have to build in

a high wind, and nothing, believe me, tries a lady's temper more than being blown about. Nature is nature, and womanfolk, my dear sirs, are the same

"There's one thing very clear, and that is that you are not a mother!"

all the world over, whether they be bird or whether they be human. I am an older person than most of you, and I speak with the weight of experience. If

I were going to build a house with my wife, I should not choose a season of the year when the bricks and planks and things were liable to be torn out of her hand, her skirts blown over her head, and she left clinging for dear life to a scaffolding pole. I know the feminine biped, and you take it from me that it is not her notion of a honeymoon. In April or May; the sun shining, the air balmy—when, after carrying up to her a load or two of bricks and a hod or two of mortar, we could knock off work for a few minutes without fear of the whole house being swept away into the next street—could sit side by side on top of a wall, our legs dangling down, and peck a morsel together, after which I could whistle a bit to her—then house-building might be a pleasure. The swallows are wisest; June is their idea, and a very good idea, too. In a mountain village in the Tyrol, early one summer, I had the opportunity of watching very closely the building of a swallow's nest. After coffee the first morning, I stepped out of the great, cool, dark passage of the inn into the blazing sunlight, and, for no particular reason, pulled to the massive door behind me. While filling my pipe, a swallow almost brushed by me, then wheeled around again and took up a position on the fence only a few yards from me. He was carrying what to him was an exceptionally large and heavy brick. He put it down beside him on the fence and called out something which I could not understand. I did not move. He got quite excited and said some

more. It was undoubtable he was addressing me—nobody else by—and I judged from his tone that he was getting cross with me. At this point my travel-

Then housebuilding might be a pleasure.

ling companion, his toilet unfinished, put his head out of the window just above me. "Such an odd thing," he called down to me. "I never noticed it last night. A pair of swallows are building their nest here in the hall. You've got to be careful you don't mistake it for a hat-peg. The old lady says they have built there regularly for the last three

years." Then it came to me what it was the gentleman had been saying to me: "I say, sir—you with a bit of wood in your mouth—you have been and shut the door and I can't get in." Now, with the key in my possession, it was so clear and understandable, I really forgot for the moment he was only a bird. "I beg your pardon," I replied; "I had no idea. Such an extraordinary place to build a nest." I opened the door for him, and, taking up his brick again, he entered and I followed him in. There was a deal of talk. "He shut the door," I heard him say. "Chap there, sucking the bit of wood. Thought I was never going to get in."—"I know," was the answer, "it has been so dark in here, if you'll believe me, I've hardly been able to see what I've been doing."—"Fine brick, isn't it? Where will you have it?" Observing me sitting there, they lowered their voices. Evidently she wanted him to put the brick down and leave her to think. She was not quite sure where she would have it. He, on the other hand, was sure he had found the right place for it. He pointed out to her and explained his views. Other birds quarrel a good deal during nest-building, but swallows are the gentlest of little people. She let him put it where he wanted to, and he kissed her and ran out. She cocked her eye after him, watched till he was out of sight, then deftly and quickly slipped it out and fixed it on the other side of the door. "Poor dear!"—I could see it in the toss of her head—"They *will* think they

know best; it is just as well not to argue with them."

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Every summer I suffer much from indignation. I love to watch the swallows building. They build beneath the eaves outside my study window. Such cheerful little chatterboxes they are! Long after sunset, when all the other birds are sleeping, the swallows still are chattering softly. It sounds as if they were telling one another some pretty story, and often I am sure there must be humor in it, for every now and then one hears a little twittering laugh. I delight in having them there, so close to me. The fancy comes to me that one day, when my brain has grown more cunning, I, too, listening in the twilight, shall hear the stories that they tell. One or two phrases already I have come to understand: "Once upon a time"—"Long, long ago"—"In a strange far-off land." I hear these words so constantly, I am sure I have them right. I call it "Swallow Street," this row of six or seven nests. Two or three, like villas in their own grounds, stand alone, and others are semi-detached. It makes me angry that the sparrows will come and steal them. The sparrows will hang about deliberately waiting for a pair of swallows to finish their nest, then, with a brutal laugh that makes my blood boil, drive the swallows away and take possession of it. And the swallows are so wonderfully patient. "Never mind, old girl," says Johnny Swallow, after the first big

cry is over, to Jenny Swallow, "let's try again," And half an hour later, full of fresh plans, they are choosing another likely site, chattering cheerfully once more. I watched the building of a particular nest for nearly a fortnight one year; and when, after two or three days' absence, I returned and found a pair of sparrows comfortably ensconced there, I just felt mad. I saw Mrs. Sparrow looking out. Maybe my anger was working upon my imagination, but it seemed to me that she nodded to me. "Nice little house, ain't it? What I call well built." Mr. Sparrow then flew up with a gaudy feather dyed blue, which belonged to me. I recognized it. It had come out of the brush with which the girl breaks the china ornaments in our drawing-room. At any other time I should have been glad to see him flying off with the whole thing, handle included. But now I felt the theft of that one feather as an added injury. Mrs. Sparrow chirped with delight at the sight of the gaudy monstrosity. Having got the house cheap they were going to spend their small amount of energy upon internal decoration. That was their idea clearly,—a "Liberty interior." She looked more like a Cockney sparrow than a country one—had been born and bred in Regent Street, no doubt. "There is not much justice in this world," said I to myself, "but there's going to be some introduced into this business—that is, if I can find a ladder." I did find a ladder, and fortunately it was long enough. Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow were out when I

arrived; possibly on the hunt for cheap photo-frames and Japanese fans. I did not want to make a mess; I removed the house neatly into a dust-pan and

Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow were out when I arrived.

wiped the street clear of every trace of it. I had just put back the ladder when Mrs. Sparrow returned with a piece of pink cotton-wool in her mouth. That was her idea of a color scheme: apple-blossom pink and Reckitt's blue side by side. She dropped her wool and sat on the waterspout and tried

to understand things. "Number 1, Number 2, Number 4, where the blazes"—sparrows are essentially common, and the women are as bad as the men—"is Number 3?" Mr. Sparrow came up from behind, over the roof. He was carrying a piece of yellow fluff, part of a lamp-shade, as far as I could judge. "Move yourself," he said; "what's the sense of sitting there in the rain."—"I went out just for a moment," replied Mrs. Sparrow; "I could not have been gone, no, not a couple of minutes. When I came back——"—"Oh, get indoors," said Mr. Sparrow, "talk about it there."—"It's what I'm telling you," continued Mrs. Sparrow, "if you would only listen. There isn't any door, there isn't any house——"—"Isn't any——" Mr. Sparrow, holding on to the rim of the spout, turned himself topsy-turvy and surveyed the street. From where I was standing behind the laurel bushes I could see nothing but his back. He stood up again looking angry and flushed. "What have you done with the house? Can't I turn my back——"—"I ain't done nothing with it. As I keep on telling you, I had only just gone——"—"Oh, bother, where you had gone! Where's the darned house gone? that's what I want to know." They looked at one another. If ever astonishment was expressed in the attitude of a bird, it was told by the tails of those two sparrows. They whispered wickedly together. The idea occurred to them that by force or cunning they might perhaps obtain possession of one of the other nests.

But all the other nests were occupied, and even gentle Jenny Swallow, in her own home with the children round about her, is not to be trifled with. Mr. Sparrow called at Number 2, put his head in at the door, then returned to the waterspout.

"Where's the darned house gone?"

"Lady says we don't live there," he explained to Mrs. Sparrow. There was silence for a while. "Not what I call a classy street," commented Mrs. Sparrow. "If it were not for this terrible tired feeling of mine," said Mr. Sparrow, "blame me if I wouldn't build a house of my own."—"Perhaps," said Mrs. Sparrow, "I have heard it said that a little bit of work, now and then, does you good."—"All

sorts of wild ideas about in the air nowadays," said Mr. Sparrow; "it don't do to listen to everybody." —"And it don't do to sit still and do nothing, neither," snapped Mrs. Sparrow. "I don't want to forget I'm a lady, but—well, any man who was a man could see things for himself."—"Why did I ever marry?" retorted Mr. Sparrow. They flew away together, quarrelling.

THAT TERRIBLE FISCAL QUESTION

THAT TERRIBLE FISCAL QUESTION

THREE weeks ago, travelling on the Underground Railway, I met a man; he was one of the saddest-looking men I have seen for years. I used to know him well in the old days when we were journalists together. I asked him, in a sympathetic tone, how things were going with him. I expected that his response would be a flood of tears, and that in the end I should have to fork out a fiver. To my astonishment, his answer was that things were going exceedingly well with him. I did not want to say to him bluntly, "Then what has happened to you to make you look like a mute at a temperance funeral?" I said, "And how are all at home?" I thought that if the trouble lay there he would take the opportunity. It brightened him somewhat, the necessity of replying to the question. It appeared that his wife was in the best of health. "You remember her," he continued, with a smile; "wonderful spirits, always cheerful, nothing seems to put her out, not even——" He ended the sentence abruptly with a sigh. His mother-in-law, I learned from further talk with him, had died since I had last met him, and had left them a comfortable little addition to their in-

come. His eldest daughter was engaged to be married. "It is entirely a love-match," he explained; "and he is such a dear, good fellow that I should not have made any objection even had he

"What has happened to you to make you look like a mute at a temperance funeral?"

been poor. But of course, as it is, I am naturally all the more content." The boy, having won the Mottle scholarship, was going up to Cambridge in the

autumn. His own health, he told me, had greatly improved, and a novel he had written in his leisure time promised to be one of the successes of the season. Then it was that I spoke plainly:

"If I am opening a wound too painful to be touched," I said, "tell me. If, on the contrary, it is an ordinary sort of trouble upon which the sympathy of a fellow worker may fall as a balm, let me hear it."—"So far as I am concerned," he replied, "I should be glad to tell you. Speaking about it does me good, and may lead—so I am always in hopes—to an idea. But, for your own sake, if you take my advice, you will not press me."—"How can it affect me?" I asked, "it is nothing to do with me, is it?"—"It need have nothing to do with you," he answered, "if you are sensible enough to keep out of it. If I tell you, from this time onward it will be your trouble also. Anyhow, this is what has happened in four other separate cases. If you like to be the fifth and complete the half dozen of us, you are welcome. But, remember, I have warned you."—"What has it done to the other five?" I demanded.—"It has changed them from cheerful, companionable persons into gloomy, one-sided bores," he told me. "They think of but one thing, they talk of but one thing, they dream of but one thing. Instead of getting over it as time goes on, it takes possession of them more and more. There are men, of course, who would be unaffected by it—who could shake it off. I warn you against it in particular, because, in

spite of all that is said, I am convinced you have a sense of humor; and, that being so, it will lay hold of you. It will plague you night and day. You see what it has made of me. Three months ago a lady interviewer described me as of a sunny temperament. If you know your own business you will get out at the next station and take care to avoid me for the next six months."

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I wish now I had taken his advice. As it was I allowed my curiosity to take possession of me, and begged him to explain. And he did so. "It was just about Christmas time," he told me. "We were discussing the Drury Lane pantomime—some three or four of us—in the smoking-room of the Devonshire Club, and young Gould said he thought it would prove a mistake, the introduction of a subject like the fiscal question into the story of 'Humpty Dumpty.' The two things, so far as we could see, had nothing to do with one another. He added that he entertained a real regard for Mr. Dan Leno, whom he had once met on a steamboat, but that there were other topics upon which he would prefer to seek that gentleman's guidance. Nettleship, on the other hand, declared that he had no sympathy with the argument that artists should never intrude upon public affairs. The actor was a fellow citizen with the rest of us. He said that, whether one agreed with their conclusions or not, one must admit that the nation owed a debt of

gratitude to Mrs. Brown Potter and to Miss Olga Nethersole for giving to it the benefit of their convictions. He had talked with both ladies in private on the subject, and was convinced they knew nearly as much about it as did most people. Burnside, who was one of the party, contended that, if sides were to be taken, a pantomime should advocate the free-food cause, seeing it was a form of entertainment supposed to appeal primarily to the tastes of the Little Englander. Then I came into the discussion. The fiscal question, I said, is on everybody's tongue. Such being the case, it is fit and proper that it should be referred to in our annual pantomime, which has come to be regarded as a review of the year's doings. But it should not have been dealt with from the political standpoint. The proper attitude to have assumed toward it was that of innocent raillery, free from all trace of partisanship. Old Johnson had strolled up and was standing behind us. 'The very thing I have been trying to get hold of for weeks,' he said, 'a bright, amusing *résumé* of the whole problem that shall give offence to neither side. You know our paper,' he continued; 'we steer clear of politics, but, at the same time, try to be up to date; it is not always easy. The treatment of the subject on the lines you suggest is just what we require. I do wish you would write me something.' He is a good old sort, Johnson; it seemed an easy thing; I said I would. Since that time I have been thinking how to do it. As a

matter of fact, I have not thought of much else. May be you can suggest something?"

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I was feeling in a good working mood, and next morning "Pilson," said I to myself, "shall have the benefit of this. He does not need anything boister-

"I do wish you would write me something."

ously funny. A few playfully witty remarks on the subject will be the ideal." I lit a pipe and sat

down to think. At half-past twelve, having to write some letters before going out to lunch, I dismissed the fiscal question from my mind. But not for long. It worried me all the afternoon. I thought, maybe, something would come to me in the evening. I wasted all that evening and I wasted all the following morning. Everything has its amusing side, I told myself. Jokes by the hundreds are built on sudden death. One turns out comic stories about funerals, about weddings. Hardly a misfortune that can happen to mankind but has produced its comic literature. An American friend of mine —Mr. W. A. Alden, if I am not committing a breach of confidence—once took a contract from the editor of an insurance journal to write four humorous stories. One was to deal with an earthquake, the second with a cyclone, the third with a flood, and the fourth with a thunderstorm. And more amusing stories I have never read. What is the matter with this fiscal question? I myself have written lightly on bimetallism. Home Rule we used to be merry over in the 'eighties. I remember one delightful evening at the Codger's Hall. It would have been more delightful still, but for a raw-boned Irishman, who rose toward eleven o'clock and requested to be informed if any other speaker was wishful to make any more jokes on the subject of ould Ireland; because, if so, the raw-boned gentleman was prepared to save time by waiting and dealing with them altogether. But if not, then—so the raw-boned gentleman an-

nounced—his intention was to go for the last speaker and the last speaker but two at once and without further warning. No other humorist rising,

In this fiscal question there must be fun.

the raw-boned gentleman proceeded to make good his threat, with the result that the fun degenerated somewhat. Even on the Boer War we used to whisper jokes to one another, in quiet places. In

this fiscal question there must be fun. Where is it?"

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For days I thought of little else. My laundress —as we call them in the Temple—noticed my trouble. "Mrs. Wilkins," I confessed, "I am trying to think of something innocently amusing to say on the fiscal question."—"I have heard about it," she said, "but I don't have much time to read the papers. They want to make us pay more for our food, don't they?"—"For some of it," I explained. "But then, we shall pay less for other things, so that really we shan't be paying more at all." "There don't seem much in it, either way," was Mrs. Wilkins's opinion. "Just so," I agreed, "that is the advantage of the system. It will cost nobody anything, and result in everybody being better off." —"The pity is," said Mrs. Wilkins, "that nobody ever thought of it before."—"The whole trouble hitherto," I explained, "has been the foreigner."— "Ah," said Mrs. Wilkins, "I never heard much good of him, though they do say the Almighty has a use for almost everything."—"These foreigners," I continued: "these Germans and Americans, they dump things on us, you know."—"What's that?" demanded Mrs. Wilkins. "What's dump?"— "Well, it's dumping, you know. You take things and you dump them down."—"But what things? How do they do it?"—"Why, all sorts of things: pig-iron, bacon, doormats—everything. They bring

them over here in ships, you understand, and then, if you please, just dump them down upon our shores." —"You don't mean surely to tell me that they just throw them out and leave them there?" queried Mrs. Wilkins. "Of course not," I replied; "when I say they dump these things upon our shores, that is a figure of speech. What I mean is they sell them to us."—"But why do we buy them if we don't want them?" asked Mrs. Wilkins. "We're not bound to buy them, are we?"—"It is their artfulness," I explained; "these Germans and Americans—and the others: they are all just as bad as one another—they insist on selling us these things at less price than they cost to make."—"It seems a bit silly of them, don't it?" said Mrs. Wilkins; "I suppose, being foreigners, poor things, they ain't naturally got much sense."—"It does seem silly of them, if you look at it that way," I admitted; "but what we have got to consider is, the injury it is doing us."—"Don't see how it can do us much harm," argued Mrs. Wilkins; "seems a bit of luck, so far as we are concerned. There's a few more things they'd be welcome to dump 'round my way." —"I don't seem to be putting this thing quite in the right light to you, Mrs. Wilkins," I confessed; "it is a long argument, and you might not be able to follow it; but you must take it as a fact now generally admitted, that the cheaper you buy things the sooner your money goes. By allowing the foreigner to sell us all these things at about half the

cost price, he is getting richer every day and we are getting poorer. Unless we, as a country, insist on paying at least twenty per cent more for every-

"I suppose," being foreigners, "they ain't naturally got much sense."

thing we want, it is calculated that in a very few years England won't have a penny left."—"Sounds a bit topsy-turvy," suggested Mrs. Wilkins. "It

may sound so," I answered; "but I fear there can be no doubt of it. The Board of Trade returns would seem to prove it conclusively."—"Well, God be praised, we've found it out in time," ejaculated Mrs. Wilkins piously.—"It is a matter of congratulation," I agreed; "the difficulty is that a good many other people say that, far from being ruined, we are doing very well, indeed, and are growing richer every year."—"But how can they say that," argued Mrs. Wilkins, "when, as you tell me, those trade returns prove just the opposite."—"Well, they say the same, Mrs. Wilkins, that the Board of Trade returns prove just the opposite."—"Well, they can't both be right," said Mrs. Wilkins.—"You would be surprised, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "how many things can be proved from Board of Trade returns." But I have not yet thought of that article for Pilson.

THE AMERICAN GIRL'S ETIQUETTE

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"HOW does she do it?" That is what the European girl wants to know. The American girl! she comes over here, and, as a British matron, reduced to slang by force of indignation, once exclaimed to me, "you'd think the whole blessed show belonged to her." The European girl is hampered by her relatives; she has to account for her father; to explain away, if possible, her grandfather. The American girl sweeps them aside: "Don't you worry about them," she says to the Lord Chamberlain. "It's awfully good of you, but don't you fuss yourself. I'm looking after my old people. That's my department. What I want you to do is just to listen to what I am saying and then hustle around. I can fill up your time all right myself." Her father may be a soap-boiler, her grandmother may have gone out charring. "That's all right," she says to her Ambassador, "they're not coming. You just take my card and tell the King that when he's got a few minutes to spare I'll be pleased to see him." And the extraordinary thing is that a day or two afterward the invitation arrives. A modern writer has said that "I'm Muriken" is the *Civis Romanus*

sum of the present-day woman's world. The late King of Saxony did, I believe, on one occasion make a feeble protest at being asked to receive the daughter of a retail bootmaker. The young lady, nonplussed for the moment, telegraphed to her father in Detroit. The answer came back next morning: "Can't call it selling; practically giving them away; see advertisement." The lady was presented as the daughter of an eminent philanthropist. It is due to her to admit that, taking her as a class, the American girl is a distinct gain to European society. Her influence is against convention and in favor of simplicity. One of her greatest charms in the eyes of the European man is that she listens to him. I cannot say whether it does her any good. Maybe she does not remember it all. But while you are talking she does give you her attention. The English woman does not always. She greets you pleasantly enough. "I've so often wanted to meet you," she says; "must you really go?" It strikes you as sudden; you had no intention of going for hours. But the hint is too plain to be ignored. You are preparing to agree that you really must, when, looking around, you gather that the last remark was not addressed to you, but to another gentleman, who is shaking hands with her. "Now, perhaps, we shall be able to talk for five minutes," she says, "I've so often wanted to say that I shall never forgive you. You have been simply horrid." Again you are confused, until you jump to the conclusion that the latter por-

tion of the speech is probably intended for quite another party with whom at the moment, her back toward you, she is engaged in a whispered conversation. When he is gone she turns again to you. But the varied expressions that pass across her face while you are discussing with her the morality of the fiscal policy bewilder you. When, explaining your own difficulty in arriving at a conclusion, you remark that Great Britain is an island, she roguishly shakes her head. It is not that she has forgotten her geography, it is that she is conducting a conversation by signs with a lady at the other end of the room. When you observe that the working classes must be fed, she smiles archly while murmuring, "Oh, do you really think so?" You are about to say something strong on the subject of dumping. Apparently she has disappeared. You find that she is reaching around behind you to tap a new arrival with her fan. Now, the American girl looks at you, and just listens to you with her eyes fixed on you all the time. You gather that, as far as she is concerned, the rest of the company are passing shadows. She wants to hear what you have to say about the fiscal question: her trouble is lest she may miss a word of it. It may not be so good for one; from a talk with the American girl one comes away with the conviction that one is a brilliant conversationalist who can hold a charming woman spellbound. But while it lasts, the sensation is a pleasant one.

Even the American girl cannot, on all occasions, sweep from her path the cobwebs of Old-World etiquette. Two American ladies told me a sad tale of things that had happened to them not long ago in Dresden. An officer of rank and standing invited them to breakfast with him on the ice. Dames and nobles of the *plus haut ton* would be there. It is a social function that occurs every Sunday morning in Dresden during the skating season. The great lake in the Grosser Garten is covered with all sorts and conditions of people. Prince and commoner circle and recircle around one another. But they do not mix. The girls were pleased. They secured the services of an elderly lady, the widow of an analytical chemist; unfortunately she could not skate. They wrapped her up and put her in a sledge. While they were in the *garde-robe* putting on their skates a German gentleman came up and bowed to them. He was a nice young man of prepossessing appearance and amiable manners. They could not call to mind his name, but remembered having met him—somewhere and on more than one occasion. The American girl is always sociable: they bowed and smiled and said it was a fine day. He replied with volubility and helped them down on the ice. He was really most attentive. They saw their friend, the officer of noble family, and with the assistance of the German gentleman skated toward him. He glided past them. They thought maybe he did not know enough to

stop, so they turned and skated after him. They chased him three times around the pond, and then, feeling tired, eased up and took counsel together.

"I'm sure he must have seen us."

"I'm sure he must have seen us," said the younger girl. "What does he mean by it?"—"Well, I have not come down here to play forfeits," said the

other, "added to which I want my breakfast. You wait here a minute, I'll go and have it out with him." He was standing only a dozen yards away. Alone, though not a good performer on the ice, she contrived to cover half the distance dividing them. The officer, perceiving her, with a pleasant smile came to her assistance and greeted her with effusion. "Oh," said the lady, who was feeling indignant, "I thought maybe you had left your glasses at home."—"I am sorry," said the officer, "but it is impossible."—"What's impossible?" demanded the lady. "That I can be seen speaking to you," declared the officer, "while you are in company with that—that person."—"What person?" She thought maybe he was alluding to the lady in the sledge. The chaperon was not showy, but, what is better, she was good. And anyhow it was the best the girls had been able to do. So far as they were concerned they had no use for a chaperon. The idea had been a thoughtful concession to European prejudice. "The person in the knickerbockers," exclaimed the officer. "Oh, that," exclaimed the lady, relieved; "he just came up and made himself agreeable while we were putting on our skates. We have met him somewhere; but I can't exactly fix him for the moment."—"You have met him possibly at Wiesman's in the Pragerstrasse; he is one of the attendants there," said the officer. The American girl is republican in her ideas, but she draws the line at hairdressers. In theory it is absurd: the hair-

dresser is a man and a brother; but we are none of us logical all the way. It made her mad, the thought that she had been seen by all Dresden society

"You have met him possibly at Wiesman's in the Prager-strasse."

skating with a hairdresser. "Well," she said, "I do call that impudence. Why, they wouldn't do that

even in Chicago." And she returned to where the hairdresser was illustrating to her friend the Dutch roll, determined to explain to him, as politely as possible, that although the free and enlightened Westerner has abolished social distinctions he has not yet abolished them to that extent.

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Had he been a commonplace German hairdresser, he would have understood English, and all might have been easy. But to the classy German hairdresser English is not so necessary, and as regards their German, the American ladies had reached only the "improving" stage. In her excitement she confused the subjunctive and the imperative and told him that he "might" go. But he had no wish to go. He assured them, so they gathered, that his intention was to devote the morning to their service. He must have been a stupid man, but it is a type occasionally encountered. Two pretty women had greeted his advances with apparent delight. They were Americans, and the American girl was notoriously unconventional. He knew himself to be a good-looking young fellow. It did not occur to him that in expressing willingness to dispense with his attendance they could be in earnest. There was nothing for it, so it seemed to the girls, but to request the assistance of the officer, who continued to skate round and round them at a distance of about ten yards. So again the elder young lady, seizing her opportunity, made appeal. "I cannot,"

explained the officer, who, having been looking forward to a morning with two of the prettiest girls in Dresden, was also feeling mad; "I dare not be seen speaking to a hairdresser. You must get rid of him."—"But we can't," said the girl. "We do not know enough German, and he can't or he won't understand us. For goodness' sake, come and help us. We'll be spending the whole morning with him if you don't." The German officer said he was desolate. Steps would be taken—later on in the week—the result of which would probably be to render that young hairdresser prematurely bald. But meanwhile, beyond skating round and round them, for which they did not even feel they wanted to thank him, the German officer could do nothing for them. They tried being rude to the hairdresser; he mistook it for American *chic*. They tried joining hands and running away from him, but they were not good skaters and he thought they were trying to show him the cake-walk. They both fell down and hurt themselves, and it is difficult to be angry with a man, even a hairdresser, when he is doing his best to pick you up and comfort you. The chaperon was worse than useless. She was very cold. She had been promised her breakfast, but saw no signs of it. She could not speak German, and remembered somewhat late in the day that two young ladies had no business to accept breakfast at the hands of German officers; and if they did, at least they might see that they got it. She

appeared to be willing to talk about decadence of modern manners to almost any extent, but the subject of the hairdresser and how to get rid of him only bored her.

Their first stroke of luck occurred when the hairdresser, showing them the "dropped three," fell

Showing them the "dropped three."

down and temporarily stunned himself. It was not kind of them, but they were desperate. They fled for the bank just anyhow, and, scrambling over the grass, gained the restaurant. The officer, overtaking them at the door, led them to the table that had been reserved for them, then hastened back to hunt

for the chaperon. The girls thought their trouble was over. Had they glanced behind them their joy would have been shorter-lived than even was the case. The hairdresser had recovered consciousness in time to see them waddling over the grass. He thought they were running to fetch him brandy. When the officer returned with the chaperon he found the hairdresser sitting opposite to them, explaining that he really was not hurt, and suggesting that, as they were there, perhaps they would like something to eat and drink. The girls made one last frantic appeal to the man of buckram and pipe-clay, but the etiquette of the Saxon Army was inexorable. It transpired that he might kill the hairdresser, but nothing else; he must not speak to him—not even explain to the poor devil why it was that he was being killed. It did not seem quite worth it. They had some sandwiches and coffee at the hairdresser's expense and went home in a cab; while the chaperon had breakfast with the officer of noble family. The American girl has succeeded in freeing European social intercourse from many of its hide-bound conventions. There is still much work for her to do. But I have faith in her.

GOLD BRAID AND ITS EFFECTS

GOLD BRAID AND ITS EFFECTS

THERE is one thing that the Anglo-Saxon does better than the "French or Turk or Rooshian," to which add the German or the Belgian. When the Anglo-American appoints an official he appoints more or less a servant: when the Frenchman and the others put a man in gold-braided uniform they add another to their long list of masters. If among your acquaintances you can discover an American or Englishman unfamiliar with the Continental official, it is worth your while to accompany him, the first time he goes out to post a letter, say. He advances toward the post-office a breezy, self-confident gentleman, borne up by pride of race. While mounting the steps he talks airily of just getting this letter off his mind, and then picking up Jobson and going on to Durand's for luncheon. He talks as if he had the whole day before him. At the top of the steps he attempts to push open the door. It will not move. He looks about him and discovers that it is the door of egress, not of ingress. It does not seem to him worth while redescending the twenty steps and climbing another twenty. So far as he is concerned he is willing to pull the door instead of pushing it. But

a stern official bars his way and haughtily indicates the proper entrance. "Oh, bother," he says, and down he trots again, and up the other flight. "I shall not be a minute," he remarks over his

Inside he looks around, bewildered.

shoulder, "you can wait for me outside." But if you know your way about, you follow him in. There are seats within, and you have a newspaper in your pocket; the time will pass pleasanter. Inside he looks around, bewildered. The German post-office, generally speaking, is about the size of the

Bank of England. It does not occur to the German bureaucracy that one and the same employee could sell a penny stamp to one man, and the next moment sufficiently hitch off his mind on to a new train of thought and sell a postal order to somebody else. It would be too risky, considers the German bureaucracy. Human adaptability has its limits. Let the stamp-seller stick to his stamps, the dispenser of postal orders save himself up for postal orders. Some twenty different windows confront your troubled friend, each one bearing its own peculiar legend. Starting with Number One, he sets to work to spell them out. It appears to him that the posting of the letters is not a thing that the German post-office desires to encourage. Would he not like a dog license instead? is what one window suggests to him. "Oh, never mind that letter of yours, come and talk about bicycles," pleads another. At last he thinks he has found the right hole; the word "Registration" he distinctly recognizes. He taps at the glass.

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Nobody takes any notice of him. The foreign official is a man whose life is saddened by a public always wanting something. You read it in his face wherever you go. The man who sells you tickets for the theatre! He is eating sandwiches when you knock at his window. He turns to his companion: "Good Lord!" you can see him say, "here's another of 'em. If there has been one man worrying

me this morning there have been a hundred. Always the same story; all of 'em want to come to see the play. You listen now; bet you anything he's going to bother me for tickets. Really, it gets on my nerves sometimes." At the railway station it is just the same. "Another man who wants to go to Antwerp! Don't seem to care for rest, these people; flying here, flying there; what's the sense of it?" It is the absurd craze on the part of the public for letter-writing; it is spoiling the temper of the Continental post-office official. He does his best to discourage it: "Look at them," he says to his assistant. The thoughtful Continental government is careful to provide every official with another official to talk to, lest by sheer force of *ennui* he might be reduced to taking interest in his work. "Twenty of 'em, all in a row; some of 'em been there for the last quarter of an hour."—"Let 'em wait another quarter of an hour," advises the assistant; "perhaps they'll go away."—"My dear fellow," he answers, "do you think I haven't tried that? There's simply no getting rid of 'em; and it's always the same cry. 'Stamps! stamps! stamps!' 'Pon my word, I think they live on stamps, some of 'em."—"Well, let 'em have their stamps," suggests the assistant with a burst of inspiration, "perhaps it will get rid of 'em."—"What's the use," wearily the older man replies; "there'll only come a fresh crowd when those are gone."—"Oh, well," argues the other, "that will be a

change, anyhow. I'm tired of looking at this lot." I put it to a German post-office clerk once; a man I had been boring for months. I said: "You think

"What's the use, there'll only come a fresh crowd."

I write these letters—these short stories, these three-act-plays, on purpose to annoy you. Do let me try and get the idea out of your head. Personally, I hate work—hate it as much as you do. This is a pleasant little town of yours; given a free choice, I could spend the whole day mooning around it, never putting pen to paper. But what am I to

do? I have a wife and children. You know what it is yourself; they clamor for food, boots, all sorts of things. I have to prepare these little packets for sale and bring them to you to send off. You see, you are here. If you were not here, if there were no post-office in this town, maybe I'd have to train pigeons, or cork the thing up in a bottle, fling it into the river and trust to luck and the Gulf Stream. But you being here and calling yourself a post-office—well, it's a temptation to a fellow." I think it did good. Anyhow, after that he used to grin when I opened the door, instead of greeting me, as formerly, with a face the picture of despair. But to return to our inexperienced friend.

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At last the wicket is suddenly opened. A peremptory official demands of him "Name and address?" Not expecting the question, he is a little doubtful of his address and has to correct himself once or twice. The official eyes him suspiciously. "Name of mother?" continues the official. "Name of what?"—"Mother!" repeats the official; "had a mother of some sort, I suppose?" He is a man who loved his mother sincerely while she lived, but she has been dead these twenty years, and for the life of him he cannot recollect her name. He thinks it was Margaret Henrietta, but is not at all sure. Besides, what on earth has his mother got to do with this registered letter that he wants to send to his partner in New York. "When did it die?" asks

the official. "When did what die? Mother?"—"No, no, the child."—"What child?" The indignation of the official is almost picturesque. "All I want to do," explains your friend, "is to register a letter——"—"A what?"—"This letter I want——" The window is slammed in his face. When, ten minutes later, he does reach the right wicket—the bureau for the registration of letters and not the bureau for the registration of infantile deaths—it is pointed out to him that the letter either is sealed or that it is not sealed. I have never been able yet to solve this problem. If your letter is sealed, it then appears that it ought not to have been sealed. If, on the other hand, you have omitted to seal it, that is your fault. In either case the letter cannot go as it is. The Continental official brings up the public on the principle of the nurse who sent the eldest girl to see what Tommy was doing and tell him he mustn't. Your friend, having wasted half an hour and mislaid his temper for the day, decides to heave this thing over and talk to the hotel porter about it. Next to the Burgomaster, the hotel porter is the most influential man in the Continental town: maybe because he can swear in seven different languages. But even he is not omnipotent.

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Three of us, on the point of starting for a walking-tour through the Tyrol, once sent on our luggage by post from Constance to Innsbruck. Our idea was that, reaching Innsbruck in the height of

the season, after a week's tramp on two flannel shirts and a change of socks, we should be glad to get into fresh clothes before showing ourselves in

Can swear in seven different languages.

civilized society. Our bags were waiting for us in the post-office; we could see them through the grating. But some informality—I have never been able to understand what it was—had occurred at Constance. The suspicions of the Swiss postal

authorities had been aroused, and special instructions had been sent that the bags were to be delivered up only to their rightful owners. It sounds sensible enough. Nobody wants his bag delivered up to anyone but the proper owner. But it had not been explained to the authorities at Innsbruck how they were to know the proper owners. Three wretched-looking creatures crawled into the post-office and said they wanted those three bags,—"those bags, there in the corner," which were nice, clean, respectable-looking bags,—the sort of bags that anyone might want. One of them produced a bit of paper, it is true, which he said had been given to him as a receipt by the post-office people at Constance. But in the lonely passes of the Tyrol one man, set upon by three, might easily be robbed of his papers and his body thrown over a precipice. The chief clerk shook his head; he was a kindly-looking man; but he had had his instructions to be careful, and he intended to be careful. He would like us to return accompanied by someone who could identify us. The hotel porter occurred to us as a matter of course. Keeping to the back streets we returned to the hotel and fished him out of his box. "I am Mr. J.," I said; "this is my friend, Mr. B., and this is Mr. S." The porter bowed and said he was delighted.—"I want you to come with us to the post-office," I explained, "and identify us." The hotel porter is always a practical man; his calling robs him of all sympathy with the hide-bound formality

of his compatriots. He put on his cap and accompanied us back to the office. He did his best; no one can say he did not. He told them who we were; they asked him how he knew. For reply he asked them how they thought he knew his mother; he just knew us; it was second nature with him. He implied that the question was a silly one, and suggested that, as his time was valuable, they should hand us over the three bags and have done with their nonsense.

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They asked him how long he had known us. He threw up his hands with an eloquent gesture; memory refused to travel back such distance. It appeared there was never a time when he had not known us. We had been boys together. Did he know anybody else who knew us? The question appeared to him almost insulting. Everybody in Innsbruck knew us, honored us, respected us,—everybody, that is, except a few post-office officials, people quite out of society. Would he kindly bring along, say one undoubtedly respectable citizen who could vouch for our identity. The request caused him to forget us and our troubles. The argument became a personal quarrel between the porter and the clerk. If he, the porter, was not a respectable citizen of Innsbruck, where was such to be found? Both gentlemen became excited, and the discussion passed beyond my understanding. But I gathered dimly, from what the clerk said, that ill-natured

remarks relative to the porter's grandfather and a missing cow had never yet been satisfactorily replied to; and, from observations made by the porter, that stories were in circulation about the

We might come each day and dress in the post-office.

clerk's aunt and a sergeant of artillery that should suggest to a discreet nephew of the lady the inadvisability of talking about other people's grand-

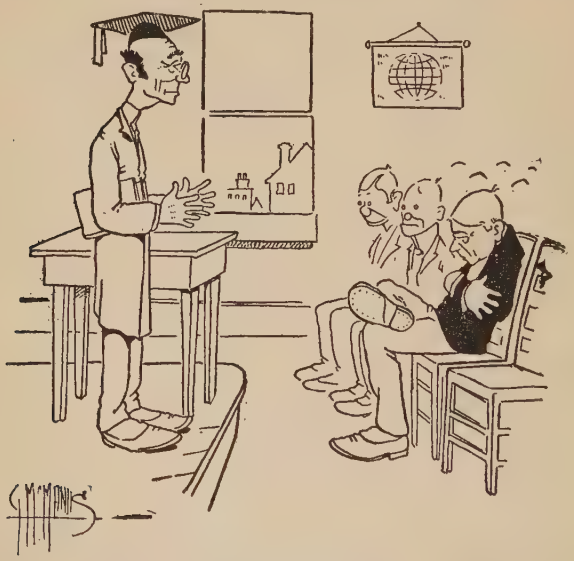
fathers. Our sympathies were naturally with the porter; he was our man, but he did not seem to be advancing our cause much. We left them quarrelling, and persuaded the head waiter that evening to turn out the gas at our end of the table d'hôte. The next morning we returned to the post-office by ourselves. The clerk proved a reasonable man when treated in a friendly spirit. He was a bit of a climber himself. He admitted the possibility of our being the rightful owners. His instructions were only not to deliver up the bags, and he, himself, suggested a way out of the difficulty. We might come each day and dress in the post-office, behind the screen. It was an awkward arrangement, even although the clerk allowed us the use of the back door. And occasionally, in spite of the utmost care, bits of us would show outside the screen. But for a couple of days, until the British Consul returned from Salzburg, the post-office had to be our dressing-room. The Continental official, I am inclined to think, errs on the side of prudence.

AMERICAN PROFESSORS AND PROGRESS

AMERICAN PROFESSORS AND PROGRESS

I AM told that American professors are "mourning the lack of ideals" at Columbia University—possibly also at other universities scattered through the United States. If it be any consolation to these mourning American professors I can assure them that they do not mourn alone. I live not far from Oxford, and enjoy the advantage of occasionally listening to the Jeremiads of English university professors. More than once a German professor has done me the honor to employ me as an object on which to sharpen his English. He also has mourned similar lack of ideals at Heidelberg, at Bonn. Youth is youth all the world over; it has its own ideals; they are not those of the university professor. The explanation is tolerably simple: Youth is young, and the university professor, generally speaking, is middle-aged. I can sympathize with the mourning professor: I, in my time, have suffered like despair. I remember the day so well; it was my twelfth birthday. I recall the unholy joy with which I reflected that for the future my unfortunate parents would be called upon to pay for me full railway fare; it marked a decided step toward manhood—I was now in my teens. That very afternoon there came to visit us

a relative of ours. She brought with her three small children: a girl, aged six; a precious golden-haired thing in a lace collar, that called itself a boy, aged five; and a third still smaller creature; it might have been male, it might have been female; I could



Enjoy the advantage of occasionally listening to the Jeremiads of English university professors.

not have told you at the time, I cannot tell you now. After dinner this collection of atoms was handed over to me. "Now, show yourself a man," said my dear mother, "remember you are in your teens. Take them out for a walk and amuse them; and mind nothing happens to them." To the children

themselves their own mother gave instructions: they were to do everything that I told them and not to tear their clothes or make themselves untidy. These directions, even to myself at the time, appeared contradictory. An army of three, entirely

This collection of atoms was handed over to me.

under my orders! Already plans were shaping in my head. But, putting trust in Providence, I said nothing. And out into the wilds the four of us departed. I was an only child. My own infancy had passed from my memory. To me, at twelve, the ideas of six were as incomprehensible as are those of twenty to the university professor of forty.

I wanted to be a pirate. Round the corner and across the road building operations were in progress. Planks and poles lay ready to one's hand. Nature in the neighborhood had placed conveniently a shallow pond. It was Saturday afternoon. The nearest public-house was half a mile away. Immunity from interference by the British workman was thus assured. It occurred to me that by placing my three depressed-looking relatives on one raft, attacking them myself from another, taking the eldest girl's sixpence away from her, disabling their raft, and leaving them to drift without a rudder, innocent amusement would be provided for half an hour at least.

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They did not want to play pirates. At first sight of the pond the thing that called itself a boy began to cry. The six-year-old lady said she did not like the smell of it. Not even after I had explained the game to them were they any the more enthusiastic for it. I proposed Red Indians. They could go to sleep in the unfinished building upon a sack of lime; I would creep up through the grass, set fire to the house, and dance round it, whooping and waving my tomahawk, watching with fiendish delight the frantic but futile efforts of the palefaces to escape their doom. It did not "catch on,"—not even that. The precious thing in the lace collar began to cry again. The creature concerning whom I could not have told you whether it was male

or female made no attempt at argument, but started to run; it seemed to have taken a dislike to this particular field. It stumbled over a scaffolding pole, and then it also began to cry. What could one do to amuse such people? I left it to them to propose something. They thought they would like to play at "Mothers"—not in this field, but in some other field. The eldest girl would be mother. The other two would represent her children. They had been taken suddenly ill. "Waterworks," as I had christened him, was to hold his hands to his middle and groan. His face brightened up at the suggestion. The nondescript had the toothache. It took up its part without a moment's hesitation and set to work to scream. I could be the doctor and look at their tongues. That was their "ideal" game. As I have said, remembering that afternoon, I can sympathize with the university professor, mourning the absence of university ideals in youth. Possibly at six my own ideal game may have been "Mothers." Looking back from the pile of birthdays upon which I now stand, it occurs to me that very probably it was. But, from the perspective of twelve, the reflection that there were beings in the world who could find recreation in such fooling saddened me. Eight years later, his father not being able to afford the time, I conducted Master "Waterworks," now a healthy, uninteresting, gawky lad to a school in Switzerland. It was my first Continental trip. I should have enjoyed it bet-

ter had he not been with me. He thought Paris a "beastly hole." He did not share my admiration for the Frenchwoman; he even thought her badly dressed. "Why, she's so tied up she can't walk straight," was the only impression she left upon

He did not share my admiration for the Frenchwoman.

him. We changed the subject; it irritated me to hear him talk. The beautiful Juno-like creatures we came across further on in Germany! He said they were too fat. He wanted to see them run. I found him utterly soulless.

To expect a boy to love learning and culture is like expecting him to prefer old vintage claret to gooseberry wine. Culture for the majority is an acquired taste. Speaking personally I am entirely in agreement with the university professor. I find that knowledge prompting to observation and leading to reflection the most satisfactory luggage with which a traveller through life can provide himself; I would that I had more of it. To be able to enjoy a picture is of more advantage than to be able to buy it. All that the university professor can urge in favor of idealism I am prepared to indorse. But then I am—let us say, thirty-nine. At fourteen my candid opinion was that he was talking "rot." I looked at the old gentleman himself: a narrow-chested, spectacled old gentleman, who lived up a by-street. He did not seem to have much fun of any sort. It was not my ideal. He told me things had been written in a language called Greek, that I should enjoy reading, but I had not even read all Captain Marryat. There were tales of Sir Walter Scott—Jack Harkaway's Schooldays! I felt I could wait a while. There was a chap called Aristophanes, who had written comedies satirizing the political institutions of a country that had disappeared two thousand years ago. I say it without shame—Drury Lane pantomime and Barnum's Circus called to me more strongly. Wishing to give the old gentleman a chance, I dipped into translations. Some of these old fellows were not as bad

as I had imagined them. A party named Homer had written some really interesting stuff. Here and there, maybe, he was a bit long-winded, but, taking him as a whole, there was "go" in him. There was another of them—Ovid was his name. He could tell a story, Ovid could. He had imagination. It was almost as good as Robinson Crusoe. I thought it would please my professor, telling him that I was reading these, his favorite authors. "Reading them!" he cried, "but you don't know Greek and Latin."—"But I know English," I answered. "They have all been translated into English. You never told me that!" It appeared it was not the same thing. There were subtle delicacies of diction, bound to escape even the best translator. These subtle delicacies of diction I could enjoy only by devoting the next seven or eight years of my life to the study of Greek and Latin. It will grieve the university professor to hear it, but the enjoyment of those subtle delicacies of diction did not appeal to me—I was only fourteen at the time, please remember—to be worth the time and trouble. The boy is materially inclined; the mourning American professor has discovered it. I did not want to be an idealist living up a back street. I wanted to live in the biggest house in the best street in town. I wanted to ride a horse, wear a fur coat, and have as much to eat and drink as ever I liked. I wanted to marry the most beautiful woman in the world, to have my name in the

newspaper, and to know that everybody was envying me. Mourn over it, my dear professor, as you will, that is the ideal of Youth, and, so long as human nature remains what it is, will continue to be so. It is a materialistic ideal, a sordid ideal. Maybe it is necessary. Maybe the world would not move much if the young men started thinking too early. They want to be rich, so they fling themselves frenziedly into the struggle. They build the towns, and make the railway tracks, hew down the forests, dig the ore out of the ground.

There comes a day when it is borne in upon them that trying to get rich is a poor sort of game, that there is only one thing more tiresome than being a millionaire, and that is trying to be a millionaire. But, meanwhile, the world has got its work done.

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The American professor fears that the artistic development of America leaves much to be desired. I fear the artistic development of most countries leaves much to be desired. Why, the Athenians themselves sandwiched their drama between wrestling-competitions and boxing-bouts! The plays of Sophocles, of Euripides, were given as "side shows." The chief business of the fair were the games and races. Besides, America is still a young man. It has been busy "getting on in the world." It has not yet quite finished. Yet there are signs that young America is approaching the thirty-nines. He is finding a little time, a little money, to spare

for art. One can almost hear young America—not quite so young as he was—saying to Mrs. Europe as he enters and closes the shop door: "Well, now, ma'am, here I am, and maybe you'll be glad to hear I've a little money to spend. Yes, ma'am, I've fixed things all right across the water; we shan't starve. So, now, ma'am, you and I can have a chat concerning this art I've been hearing so much about. Let's have a look at it, ma'am. Trot it out, and don't you be afraid of putting a fair price upon it." I am inclined to think that Mrs. Europe has not hesitated to put a good price upon the art she has sold to Uncle Sam. I am afraid Mrs. Europe has occasionally "unloaded" on Uncle Sam. I talked to a certain dealer one afternoon a few years ago at the Uwantit Club: "What is the next picture likely to be missing?" I asked him in the course of general conversation. "Thome little thing of H——'th, if it mutht be," he replied with confidence. "H——," I murmured, "I seem to have heard the name." "Yeth! You'll hear it a bit oftener during the next eighteen month or tho. You take care you don't get tired of hearing it, that'th all!" He laughed. "Yeth," he continued thoughtfully, "Reynoldth ith played out. Nothing to be made of Gainthborough, either. Dealing in that lot now, why, it'th like keeping a potht-offith. H—— ith the coming man."—"You've been buying up H——'s cheap," I suggested. "Between uth," he answered, "yeth, I think we've got them all.

May be a few more. I don't think we've mithed any."—"You will sell them for more than you gave for them?" I hinted. "You're thmart," he answered, regarding me admiringly, "you thee through everything, you do."

"How do you work it?" I asked him. There is a time in the day when he is confidential. "Here is this man H——. I take it you have bought him up at an average of a hundred pounds a picture, and that at that price most owners were fairly glad to sell. Few folks outside the art schools have ever heard of him. I bet that at the present moment there isn't one art critic who could spell his name without reference to a dictionary. In eighteen months you will be selling him for anything from one thousand to ten thousand pounds. How is it done?"—"How ith everything done that'th done well?" he answered. "By earnetht effort." He hitched his chair nearer to me. "I get a chap—one of your thort of chapth—he writ'th an article about H——. I get another to anthwer him. Before I've done there'll be a hundred articles about H——, hith life, hith early thtruggleth, anecdo'th about his wife. Then a H—— will be thold at public auction for a thouthand guineath."—"But how can you be certain it will fetch a thousand guineas?" I interrupted.—"I happen to know the man who'th going to buy it." He winked, and I understood. "A fortnight later there will be a thale of half a dothen, and the prithe will be gone up by that time."—

"And after that?" I said.—"After that," he replied, rising, "the American millionaire, he'll jutht be waiting on the door-thtep for the thale-

There isn't one art critic who could spell his name without reference to a dictionary.

room to open."—"If by any chance I come across a H——," I said, laughing, as I turned to go.—"Don't you hold on to it too long, that'th all," was his advice.

MEN, WOMEN AND CARNIVALS

MEN, WOMEN AND CARNIVALS

THERE is so much I could do to improve things generally in and about Europe, if only I had a free hand. I should not propose any great fundamental changes. Those poor people have got used to their own ways; it would be unwise to reform them all at once. But there are many little odds and ends that I could do for them, so many of their mistakes I could correct for them. They do not know this. If they only knew that there was a man living in their midst, willing to take them in hand and arrange things for them, how glad they would be! But the story is always the same. One reads it in the advertisements of the matrimonial column: "A lady, young, said to be good-looking,"—she herself is not sure on the point, she feels that possibly she may be prejudiced; she put before you merely the current gossip of the neighborhood; people say she is beautiful; they may be right, they may be wrong, it is not for her to decide,—"well educated; of affectionate disposition; possessed of means; desires to meet a gentleman, with view to matrimony." Immediately underneath one reads that "a gentleman of twenty-eight, tall, fair, considered agreeable——" Really the modesty of the matrimonial

advertiser teaches to us ordinary mortals quite a beautiful lesson. I know instinctively that were anybody to ask me suddenly, "Do you call yourself an agreeable man?" I should answer promptly. "An agreeable man! Of course I'm an agreeable man. What silly questions you do ask!" If he persisted in arguing the matter, saying, "But there are people who do not consider you an agreeable man," I should get angry with him. "Oh, they think that, do they?" I should say, "Well, you tell them from me, with my compliments, that they are a set of blithering idiots. Not agreeable! You show me the man who says I'm not agreeable. I'll soon let him know whether I'm agreeable or not." These young men seeking a wife are silent on the subject of their own virtues. Such are for others to discover. The matrimonial advertiser confines himself to simple statement of fact: he is "considered agreeable." He is domestically inclined, and in receipt of a good income. He is desirous of meeting a lady of serious disposition, with view to matrimony. If possessed of means —it is a trifle hardly worth considering one way or the other; he does not insist upon it; on the other hand, he does not exclude ladies of means; the main idea is matrimony. It is sad to reflect that a young lady said to be good-looking—let us say good-looking and be done with it. A neighborhood does not rise up and declare a girl good-looking if she is not good-looking. That is only her modest

way of putting it. Let us say a young lady good-looking, well-educated, of affectionate disposition. It is sad to reflect—I repeat it—that such an one,

A young lady said to be good-looking.

matrimonially inclined, should be compelled to have recourse to the columns of a matrimonial journal. What are the young men in the neighborhood thinking of? What more do they want? Is it Venus come to life again, with ten thousand a year, that

they are waiting for! It makes me angry with my own sex, reading these advertisements. And when one thinks of the girls that do get married——

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But life is a mystery. The fact remains: here is the ideal wife seeking in vain for a husband. And here immediately underneath—I will not say the ideal husband, he may have faults, none of us are perfect, but, as men go, a decided acquisition to any domestic hearth—an agreeable gentleman, fond of home life—none of your gadabouts—calls aloud to the four winds for a wife—any sort of a wife, provided she be of serious disposition. In his despair he has grown indifferent to all other considerations. Is there in this world, he has said to himself, one unmarried woman, willing to marry me, an agreeable man, in receipt of a good income. Possibly enough this twain have passed one another in the street, have sat side by side in the same tram-car, never guessing, each one, that the other was the very article of which they were in want to make life beautiful. Mistresses in search of a servant—not so much with the idea of getting work out of her, rather with the object of making her happy—advertise on one page. On the opposite page, domestic treasures—disciples of Carlyle, apparently, with passionate love of work for its own sake—are seeking situations, not so much with the desire of gain as with the hope of finding openings where they may enjoy the luxury of feeling that they are

leading useful lives. These philanthropic mistresses, these toil-loving handmaidens, have lived side by side in the same town for years, never knowing one another. So it is with these poor European peoples. They pass me in the street. They do not guess that I am ready and willing to take them under my care, to teach them common sense, with a smattering of intelligence, to be, as one might say, a father to them. They look at me. There is nothing about me to tell them that I know what is good for them better than they do themselves. In the fairy tales the wise man wears a comical hat and a long robe with twiddly things all round the edge. You knew he is a clever man. It avoided the necessity of explanation. Unfortunately the fashion has gone out. We wise men have to wear just ordinary clothes. Nobody knows we are wise men. Even when we tell them so, they don't believe it. It is this that makes our task more difficult.

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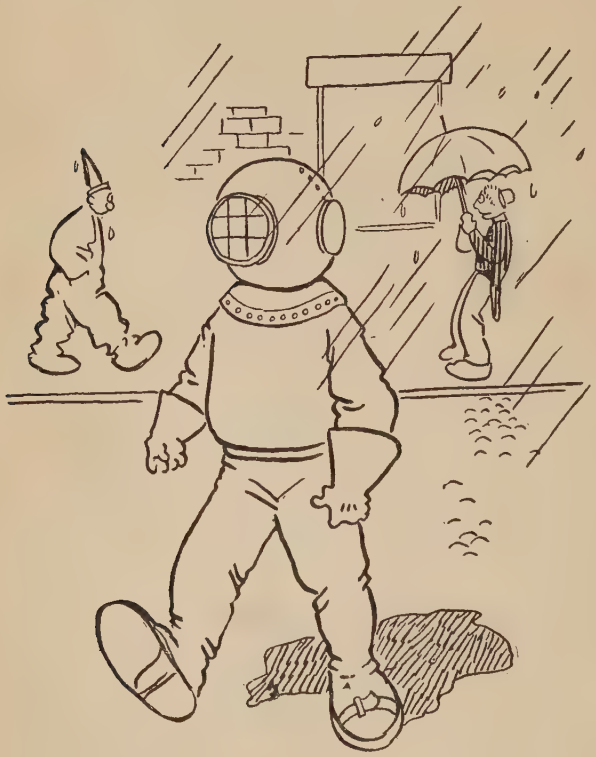
One of the first things I should take in hand, were European affairs handed over to my control, would be the re-arrangement of this Carnival business. As matters are at present the Carnival takes place all over Europe in February. At Nice, in Spain, or in Italy it may be occasionally possible to feel that you want to dance about the streets in thin costume during February. But in more northern countries during Carnival time I have seen only one sensible

masker; he was a man who had got himself up as a diver. It was in Antwerp, the rain was pouring down in torrents; a cheery, boisterous, John Bull

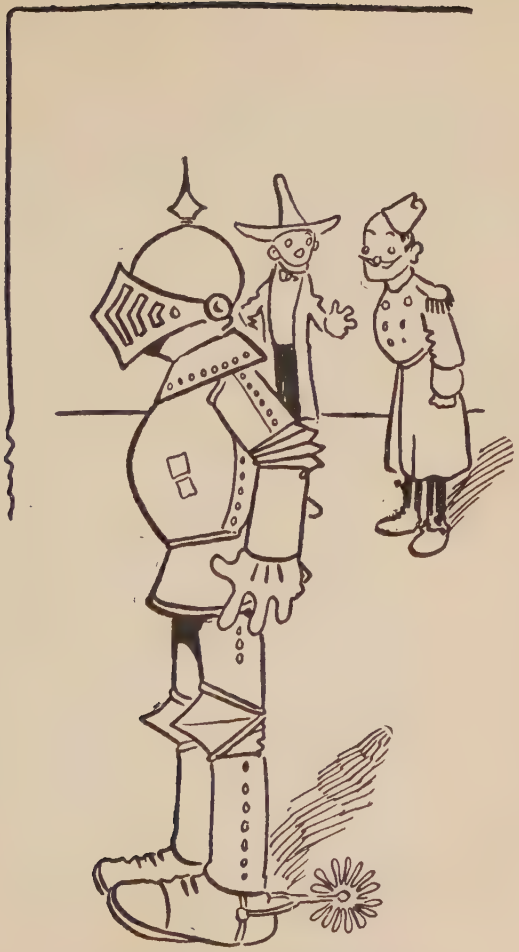


The diver alone walked erect.

sort of an east wind was blustering through the streets at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. Pierrots with frozen hands were blowing blue noses.

An elderly Cupid had borrowed an umbrella from a café and was waiting for a tram. A very little devil was crying with the cold and wiping his eyes with the end of his own tail. Every doorway was crowded with shivering maskers. The diver alone walked erect, the water streaming from him. February is not the month for open-air masquerading. The *confetti,* which has come to be nothing but colored paper cut into small disks, is a sodden mass. When a lump of it strikes you in the eye, your instinct is not to laugh gaily, but to find out the man who threw it and to hit him back. This is not the true spirit of Carnival. The marvel is that in spite of the almost invariably adverse weather these Carnivals still continue. In Belgium, where Catholicism still remains the dominant religion, Carnival maintains itself stronger than elsewhere in northern Europe. At one small town—Binche, near the French border—it holds uninterrupted sway for three days and two nights, during which time the whole population, swelled by visitors from twenty miles round, shouts, romps, eats and drinks, and dances, after which the visitors are packed like sardines into railway trains. They pin their tickets to their coats and promptly go to sleep. At every station the railway officials stumble up and down the trains with lanterns. The last feeble effort of the more wakeful reveller, before he adds himself to the heap of snoring humanity on the floor of the railway carriage, is to change the tickets of a

couple of his unconscious companions. In this way gentlemen for the east are dragged out by the legs at junctions and packed into trains going west; while southern fathers are shot out in the chill dawn at lonely northern stations to find themselves greeted with enthusiasm by other people's families. At Binche they say—I have not counted them myself—that thirty thousand maskers can be seen dancing at the same time. When they are not dancing they are throwing oranges at one another. The houses board up their windows. The restaurants take down their mirrors and hide away the glasses. If I went masquerading at Binche I should go as a man in armor, period Henry the Seventh. "Doesn't it hurt," I asked a lady who had been there, "having oranges thrown at you? Which sort do they use, speaking generally: those fine, juicy ones—Javas, I think you call them—or the little hard brand with skins like nutmeg-graters? And, if both sorts are used indiscriminately, which do you personally prefer?"—"The smart people," she answered, "they are the same everywhere—they must be extravagant,—they use the Java oranges. If one hits you in the back, I prefer the Java orange. Of course, it's more messy than the other, but it does not leave behind it that curious sensation of having been temporarily stunned. Most people, of course, make use of the small hard orange. If you duck in time, and so catch it on the top of your head, it does not hurt so much as you



I should go as a man in armor.

would think. If, of course, it hits you on a tender place—well, myself, I always find that a little sal volatile, with old cognac—half and half, you understand—is about the best thing. But it only happens once a year," she added.

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Nearly every town gives prizes for the best group of maskers. In some cases the first prize amounts to as much as two hundred pounds. The butchers, the bakers, the candlestick-makers, join together and compete. They arrive in wagons—each group with its band. Free trade is encouraged. Each neighboring town and village "dumps" its load of picturesque merry-makers. It is in these smaller towns that the spirit of King Carnival finds its happiest expression. Almost every third inhabitant takes part in the fun. In Brussels and the larger towns the thing appears ridiculous. A few hundred maskers force their way with difficulty through thousands of dull-clad spectators, looking like a Spanish river in the summer time; a feeble stream, dribbling through acres of muddy bank. At Charleroi, the centre of the Belgian "Black Country," the chief feature of the Carnival is the dancing of the children. A space is specially roped off for them. If by chance the sun is kind enough to shine, the sight is a pretty one. How they love the dressing up and the acting, these small mites! One young hussy, she could hardly have been more than ten, was gotten up as a haughty young lady. Maybe some elder sister had

served her as model. She wore a tremendous wig of flaxen hair, a hat that I guarantee would have made its mark even at Ascot on the Cup Day, a skirt that trailed two yards behind her, a pair of what had once been white-kid gloves, and a blue-silk parasol. Dignity! I have seen the offended barmaid, I have met the chorus girl—not by appointment, please don't misunderstand me, merely as a spectator—up the river on Sunday, but never have I witnessed in any human being so much hauteur to the pound avoirdupois as was carried through the streets of Charleroi by that small brat. Companions of other days, mere vulgar boys and girls, claimed acquaintance with her. She passed them with a stare of such utter disdain that it sent them tumbling over one another backward. By the time they had recovered themselves sufficiently to think of an old tin kettle lying handy in the gutter she had turned the corner. Two miserably clad urchins, unable to scrape together the few sous necessary for the hire of a rag or two, had nevertheless determined not to be altogether out of it. They had managed to borrow a couple of white blouses—not what you would understand by a white blouse, dear madam, a dainty thing of frills and laces, but the coarse white sack the street-sweeper wears over his other clothes. They had also borrowed a couple of brooms. Ridiculous little objects they looked, only the tiny head of each showing above the great white shroud as gravely

they walked, the one behind the other, sweeping the mud into the gutter. They also were of the Carnival, playing at being scavengers. Another quaint

But never have I witnessed in any human being so much hauteur to the pound.

sight I witnessed, coming sharply around the corner of a by-street. The "serpentine" is a feature of the Belgian Carnival. It is a strip of colored paper, some dozen yards long, perhaps. You fling it as you would a lasso, entangling the head of some

passer-by. Naturally the object most aimed at by the Belgian youths is the Belgian maiden. And naturally, also, the maiden who finds herself most entangled is the maiden who—to use again the language of the matrimonial advertiser—is "considered good-looking." The serpentine about her head is the "feather in her cap" of the Belgian maiden on Carnival day. Coming suddenly around the corner I almost ran into a girl. Her back was toward me. It was a very quiet street, leading into another quiet street. She had half a dozen of these serpentines in her pocket. Hurriedly, with trembling hands, she was twisting them around and around her own head. I looked at her as I passed. She flushed scarlet. Poor little snub-nosed, pasty-faced woman! I wish she had not seen me. I could have bought six-penny worth of serpentines, followed her, and tormented her with them; while she would have pretended indignation and sought discreetly to escape from me.

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Down South, where the blood flows quicker, King Carnival is indeed a jolly old soul. In Munich he reigns for six weeks, the end coming with a mad two days' revel in the streets. During the whole of the period, folks in ordinary, every-day costume are regarded as curiosities; people wonder what they are up to. From the *Gräfin* to the *Dienstmädchen,* from the Herr Professor to Riccolo, as they serve to make antics that answer to our page-

boy, the business of Munich is dancing—somewhere, somehow—in a fancy costume. The costume ball is everywhere—at the palace, at the beer-hall. Every theatre clears away the stage, every café crowds its chairs and tables into corners, the very streets are cleared for dancing. Munich goes mad. But then, that does not mean it goes far. Munich is always a little mad. The maddest ball I ever danced at was in Munich. I went there with a Harvard University professor. He had been told what these balls were like. Ever seeking knowledge of all things, he determined to take the matter up for himself and examine it. The writer also must ever be learning. I agreed to accompany him. We had not intended to dance. Our idea was that we would be indulgent spectators, regarding from some coign of vantage the antics of the foolish crowd. The professor was clad as became a professor. Myself, I wore a simply-cut frock coat with trousering in French gray. The doorkeeper explained to us that this was a costume ball; he was sorry, but gentlemen could be admitted only in evening dress or in masquerade. It was half-past one in the morning. We had sat up late on purpose; we had gone without our dinner; we had walked two miles. The professor suggested pinning up the tails of his clerically-cut coat and turning in his waistcoat. The doorkeeper feared it would not be quite the same thing. Besides, my French gray trousers refused to adapt themselves.

The doorkeeper proposed our hiring a costume—a little speculation of his own; gentlemen found it simpler sometimes, especially married gentlemen, to hire a costume in this manner, changing back into sober garments before returning home. It reduced the volume of necessary explanation. "Have you anything, my good man," said the professor, "anything that would effect a complete disguise?" The doorkeeper had the very thing—a Chinaman with combined mask and wig. It fitted neatly over the head and was provided with a simple but ingenious piece of mechanism by means of which much could be done with the pigtail. Myself the doorkeeper hid from view under the cowl of a Carmelite monk. "I do hope nobody recognizes us," whispered my friend, the professor, as we entered. I can only hope sincerely that they did not. I do not wish to talk about myself; that would be egotism. But the mystery of the Harvard professor troubles me to this day. A grave, earnest gentleman, the father of a family, I saw him with my own eyes put that ridiculous pasteboard mask over his head. Later on—a good deal later on—I found myself walking again with him through silent starlit streets. Where he had been in the interval, and who then was the strange creature under the Chinaman's mask, will always remain to me unsolved problems.

THE CHINAMAN

THE CHINAMAN

"WHAT'S all this talk I 'ear about the Chinese?" said Mrs. Wilkins to me the other morning. We generally indulge in a little chat while Mrs. Wilkins is laying the breakfast table. Letters and newspapers do not arrive in my part of the Temple much before nine. From half-past-eight to nine I am rather glad of Mrs. Wilkins. "They've been up to some of their tricks again, 'aven't they?"—"The foreigner, Mrs. Wilkins," I replied, "whether he be Chinee or any other he, is always up to tricks. Was not England specially prepared by an all-wise Providence to frustrate these knavish tricks? Which of such particular tricks may you be referring to at the moment, Mrs. Wilkins?"—"Well, 'e's comin' over 'ere, isn't 'e, sir, to take the work out of our mouths, as it were?" —"Well, not exactly over here, to England, Mrs. Wilkins," I explained, "there's talk of his being introduced into Africa to work in the mines there." —"It's a funny thing," said Mrs. Wilkins, "but to 'ear the way some of 'em talk in our block, you might run away with the notion—that is, if you didn't know 'em—that work was their only joy. I said to one of 'em, the other evening—a man as

calls 'isself a brass-finisher, though, Lord knows, the only brass he ever finishes is what his poor wife earns, and isn't quick enough to hide away from 'im —' Well, whatever 'appens,' I says, ' it will be clever

"They've been up to some of their tricks again, 'aven't they?"

of 'em if they take away much work from you.' It made them all laugh, that did," added Mrs. Wilkins, with a touch of pardonable pride. "Ah," continued the good lady, "it's surprisin' 'ow contented they can be with a little, some of 'em. Give 'em a 'ard-working woman to look after 'em, and a day out once a week with a procession of the un-

employed, they don't ask for nothing more. There's that beauty my poor sister Jane was fool enough to marry. Serves 'er right, as I used to tell 'er at first, till there didn't seem any more need to rub it into her. She'd 'ad one good 'usband. It wouldn't 'ave been fair for 'er to 'ave 'ad another, even if there'd been a chance of it, seein' the few of 'em there is to go round among so many. But it's always the same with us widows, if we 'appen to 'ave been lucky the first time, we put it down to our own judgment—think we can't ever make a mistake again; an' if we draw a wrong 'un, as the sayin' is, we argue as if it was the duty of Providence to make it up to us the second time. Why, I'd 'a' been making a fool of myself three years ago if 'e 'adn't been good-natured enough to call one afternoon when I was out an' 'ook it off with two-pound eight in the best teapot, that I 'ad been soft enough to talk to 'im about; an' never let me set eyes on 'im again: God bless 'im! 'E's one of the born-tireds, 'e is," continued Mrs. Wilkins, "as poor Jane might 'ave seen for 'erself, if she'd only looked at 'im. But that's courtship all the world over—old an' young alike so far as I've been able to see it: the man's all eyes an' the woman's all ears. They don't seem to 'ave any other senses left 'em. I ran against 'im the other night, on my way 'ome, at the corner of Gray's Inn Road. There was the usual crowd watching a pack of them Italians laying down the ashphalt in 'Olborn, and

'e was among 'em. 'E 'ad secured the only lamp-post an' was leaning agen it. 'Hullo!' I says. 'Glad to see you 'aven't lost yer job. Nothin' like stickin' to it when you've dropped into somethin' that really suits you.'—'What do you mean,

"'E's one of the born-tireds."

Martha?' 'e says. 'E's not one of what I calls your smart sort. It takes a bit of sarcasm to get through 'is 'ed. 'Well,' I says, 'you're still on the old track, I see, lookin' for work. Take care you don't 'ave a accident one of these days an' run up agen it before you've got time to get out of its way.' 'It's these mis'rable foreigners,' 'e says, 'look at

'em,' 'e says. 'There's enough of you doing that,' I says, 'I've got my room to put straight, an' three hours' needlework to do before I can get to bed. But don't let me 'inder you. You might forget what work was like if you didn't take an opportunity of watchin' it now an' then.'—'They come over 'ere,' 'e says, 'an' take the work away from us chaps.' 'Ah,' I says, 'poor things, perhaps they ain't married.' 'Lazy devils!' 'e says, 'look at 'em, smokin' cigarettes. I could do that sort of work. There's nothin' in it. It don't take 'eathen foreigners to dab a bit of tar about a road.'—'Yes,' I says, 'you always could do everybody else's work but your own.'—'I can't find it, Martha,' 'e says. —'No,' I says, 'an' you never will in the sort of places you go lookin' for it. They don't 'ang it out on lamp-posts, an' they don't leave it about at the street corners. One of these days,' I says, 'when you're walkin' about 'appy an' careless, not thinkin' about it, you'll run up agen it, as I tell you, an' then you'll get the biggest shock you've ever 'ad in all your life. Go 'ome,' I says, 'an' turn the mangle for your poor wife. That's big enough for you to find, even in the dark.' Lookin' for work!" snorted Mrs. Wilkins with contempt, "we women never 'ave much difficulty in findin' it, I've noticed. There are times when I feel I could do with losin' it for a day."

"But what did he reply, Mrs. Wilkins?" I asked: "your brass-finishing friend, who was holding forth

on the subject of Chinese cheap labor." Mrs. Wilkins as a conversationalist is not easily kept to the point. I was curious to know what the working classes were thinking on the subject. "Oh, that," replied Mrs. Wilkins, "e didn't say nothin'. 'E ain't the sort that's got much to say in an argument. 'E belongs to the crowd that 'angs about at the back an' does the shoutin'. But there was another of 'em, a young fellow as I feels sorry for, with a wife an' three small children, who 'asn't 'ad much luck for the last six months; an' that through no fault of 'is own, I should say, from the look of 'im. 'I was a fool,' says 'e, 'when I chucked a good situation an' went out to the war. They told me I was goin' to fight for equal rights for all white men. I thought they meant that all of us were goin' to 'ave a better chance, an' it seemed worth makin' a bit of a sacrifice for, that did. I should be glad if they'd give me a job in their mines that'd enable me to feed my wife an' children. That's all I'd ask 'em for."—"It is a difficult problem, Mrs. Wilkins," I said. "According to the mine-owners——"—"Ah," said Mrs. Wilkins, "they don't seem to be exac'ly what you'd call popular, them mine-owners, do they? Daresay they're not as bad as they're painted."—"Some people, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "paint them very black. There are those who hold that the South African mine-owner is not a man at all; but a kind of pantomime demon. You take Goliath, the whale that

swallowed Jonah, a selection from the least respectable citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah at their worst. Bluebeard, bloody Queen Mary, Guy Fawkes, and the sea serpent—or, rather, you take the most objectionable attributes of all these various personages, and mix them up together. The result is the South African mine-owner, a monster who would willingly promote a company for the putting on the market of a new meat extract, prepared exclusively from new-born infants, provided the scheme promised a fair and reasonable opportunity of fleecing the widow and the orphan."—"I've 'eard they're a bad lot," said Mrs. Wilkins, "but we're most of us that, if we listen to what other people say about us."—"Quite so, Mrs. Wilkins," I agreed. "One never arrives at the truth by listening to one side only. On the other hand, for example, there are those who stoutly maintain that the South African mine-owner is a kind of spiritual creature, all heart and sentiment, who, against his own will, has been, so to speak, dumped down upon this earth as the result of over-production, up above, of the higher class of archangel. The stock of archangels of superior finish exceeds the heavenly demands: the surplus has been dropped down into South Africa and has taken to mine-owning. It is not that these celestial visitors of German-sounding nomenclature care themselves about the gold. Their only desire is, during this earthly pilgrimage of theirs, to benefit the human race. Nothing can

be obtained in this world without money——" —"That's true," said Mrs. Wilkins, with a sigh. —"For gold, everything can be obtained. The aim of the mine-owning archangel is to provide the world with gold. Why should the world trouble to grow things and make things? 'Let us,' say these archangels temporarily dwelling in South Africa, 'dig up and distribute to the world plenty of gold; then the world can buy whatever it wants, and be happy.'"

"There may be a flaw in the argument, Mrs. Wilkins," I allowed, "I am not presenting it to you as the last word upon the subject. I am merely quoting the view of the South African mine-owner, feeling himself a much-misunderstood benefactor of mankind."—"I expect," said Mrs. Wilkins, shrewdly, "they are just the ordinary sort of Christian, like the rest of us, anxious to do the best they can for themselves, and not too particular as to doing other people in the process."—"I am inclined to think, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "that you are not very far from the truth. A friend of mine a couple of months ago was very bitter on this subject of Chinese cheap labor. With his strong denunciation of the proposal one was bound to concur. It was founded throughout upon the highest ideals. A little later there died a distant relative of his who left him twenty thousand South African mining shares. He thinks now that to object to the importation of Chinese is narrow-minded, illiberal,

and against all religious teaching. He has bought an abridged edition of Confucius, and tells me that there is much that is ennobling in Chinese morality. Indeed, I gather from him that the introduction of the Chinese into South Africa will be the saving of that country. The noble Chinee will afford an object-lesson to the poor white man, displaying to him the virtues of sobriety, thrift, and humility. I also gather that it will be of inestimable benefit to the noble Chinee himself. The Christian missionary will get hold of him in bulk, so to speak, and imbue him with the higher theology. It appears to be one of those rare cases where everybody is benefited at the expense of nobody. It is always a pity to let these rare opportunities slip by."

"Well," said Mrs. Wilkins, "I've nothin' to say agen the Chinaman as a Chinaman. As to 'is bein' a 'eathen, well, throwin' stones at a church, as the sayin' is, don't make a Christian of you. There's Christians I've met as couldn't do themselves much 'arm by changin' their religion; an' as to cleanliness, well, I've never met but one, an' 'e was a washerwoman, an' I'd rather 'ave sat next to 'im in a third-class carriage on a Bank 'oliday than next to some of 'em. Seems to me," continued Mrs. Wilkins, "we've got into the 'abit of talkin' a bit too much about other people's dirt. The London atmosphere ain't nat'rally a dry-cleanin' process in itself; but there's a goodish few as seem to think it is. One comes across free-born Britons 'ere an' there

as I'd be sorry to scrub clean for a shillin' an' find my own soap."—"It is a universal failing, Mrs. Wilkins," I explained. "If you talk to a travelled

"I've never met but one, an' 'e was a washerwoman."

Frenchman, he contrasts, to his own satisfaction, the Paris *ouvrier* in his blue blouse with the appearance of the London laborer."—"I daresay

they're all right accordin' to their lights," said Mrs. Wilkins, "but it does seem a bit wrong that if our own chaps are willin' an' anxious to work, after all that they've done, too, in the way of gettin' the mines for us, that they shouldn't be allowed the job."—"Again, Mrs. Wilkins, it is difficult to arrive at a just conclusion," I said. "The mine-owner, according to his enemies, hates the British workman with the natural instinct that evil creatures feel toward the noble and virtuous. He will go to trouble and expense merely to spite the British workman, to keep him out of South Africa. According to his friends the mine-owner sets his face against the idea of white labor for two reasons. First and foremost, it is not nice work; the mine-owner hates the thought of his beloved white brother toiling in the mines. It is not right that the noble white man should demean himself by such work. Secondly, white labor is too expensive. If, for digging gold, men had to be paid anything like the same prices they are paid for digging coal, the mines could not be worked. The world would lose the gold that the mine-owner is anxious to bestow upon it. The mine-owner, following his own inclinations, would take a little farm, grow potatoes, and live a beautiful life—perhaps write a little poetry. A slave to a sense of duty, he is chained to the philanthropic work of gold-mining. If we hamper him and worry him, the danger is that he will get angry with us—possibly he will order

his fiery chariot and return to where he came from." —"Well, 'e can't take the gold with him, wherever 'e goes to," argued Mrs. Wilkins. "You talk, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "as if gold were of more value to the world than is the mine-owner."—"Well, isn't it?" demanded Mrs. Wilkins.—"It's a new idea, Mrs. Wilkins," I answered, "it wants thinking out."

RED-HOT STOVES I HAVE MET

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THEY are odd folks, these foreigners. There are moments of despair when I almost give them up—feel I don't care what becomes of them—feel as if I could let them muddle on in their own way—wash my hands of them, so to speak, and attend exclusively to my own business: we all have our days of feebleness. They will sit outside a café on a freezing night, with an east wind blowing, and play dominoes. They will stand outside a tramcar, rushing through the icy air at fifteen miles an hour, and refuse to go inside, even to oblige a lady. Yet in railway carriages, in which you could grill a bloater by the simple process of laying it underneath the seat, they will insist on the window being closed, light cigars to keep their noses warm, and sit with the collars of their fur coats buttoned up around their necks. In their houses they keep the double windows hermetically sealed for three or four months at a time; and the hot air quivering about the stove scorches your face if you venture nearer to it than a yard. Travel can broaden the mind. It can also suggest to the Britisher that in some respects his countrymen are nothing near so silly as they are supposed to be. There was a time

when I used to sit with my legs stretched out before the English coal-fire, and listen with respectful attention while people who I thought knew all about

They will sit outside a café on a freezing night, and play dominoes.

it explained to me how wicked and how wasteful were our methods. All the heat from that fire, they told me, was going up the chimney. I did not like to answer them that notwithstanding I felt warm and cosy. I feared it might be merely British stupidity that kept me warm and cosy, not the fire at

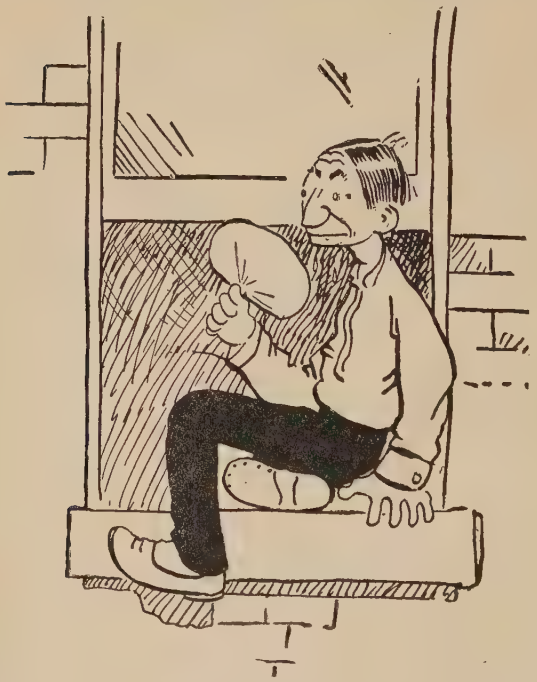
all. How could it be the fire? The heat from the fire was going up the chimney. It was the glow of ignorance that was making my toes tingle. Besides, if by sitting close in front of the fire and looking hard at it, I did contrive, by hypnotic suggestion, maybe, to fancy myself warm, what should I feel like at the other end of the room? It seemed like begging the question to reply that I had no particular use for the other end of the room; that, generally speaking, there was room enough about the fire for all the people I really cared for; that sitting all together around the fire seemed quite as sensible as sulking by one's self in a corner at the other end of the room; and that the fire made a cheerful and convenient focus for family and friends. They pointed out to me how a stove, blocking up the centre of the room, with a dingy looking flue-pipe wandering around the ceiling, would enable us to sit ranged around the walls, like patients in a hospital waiting-room: and use up coke and potato-peelings. Since then I have had practical experience of the scientific stove. I want the old-fashioned, unsanitary, wasteful, illogical, open fireplace. I want the heat to go up the chimney, instead of stopping in the room and giving me a headache and making everything go round. When I come in out of the snow I want to see a fire—something that says to me with a cheerful crackle, "Hello, old man! Cold outside, isn't it? Come and sit down. Come quite close and warm your hands. That's right, put your foot under him

and persuade him to move a yard or two. That's all he's been doing for the last hour, lying there roasting himself, lazy little devil. He'll get softening of the spine, that's what 'll happen to him. Put your toes on the fender. The tea will be here in a minute." I want something that I can toast my back against, while standing with coat-tails tucked up and my hands in my pockets, explaining things to people. I don't want a comfortless, staring, white thing, in a corner of the room, behind the sofa—a thing that looks and smells like a family tomb. It may be hygienic, and it may be hot, but it does not seem to do me any good. It has its advantages; it contains a cupboard into which you can put things to dry. You can also forget them and leave them there. Then people complain of a smell of burning, and hope the house is not on fire, and you ease their mind by explaining to them that it is probably only your boots. Complicated internal arrangements are worked by a key. If you put on too much fuel and do not work this key properly, the thing explodes. And if you do not put on any coal at all and the fire goes out suddenly, then, likewise, it explodes. That is the only way it knows of calling attention to itself. On the Continent, you know when the fire wants seeing to merely by listening. "Sounded like the dining-room, that last explosion," somebody remarks. "I think not," observes another, "I distinctly felt the shock behind me—my bedroom, I expect." Bits of the ceiling be-

gin to fall, and you notice that the cheval-glass over the sideboard is slowly coming toward you. "Why, it must be this stove," you say, "curious, how difficult it is to locate sound." You snatch up the children and hurry out of the room. After a while, when things have settled down, you venture to look in again. Maybe it was only a mild explosion. A ten-pound note and a couple of plumbers in the house for a week will put things right again. They tell me they are economical, these German stoves, but you have got to understand them. I think I have learned the trick of them at last. And I don't suppose, all told, it has cost me more than fifty pounds. And now I am trying to teach the rest of the family. What I complain about in the family is that they do not seem anxious to learn. "You do it," they say, pressing the coal-scoop into my hands; "it makes us nervous." It is a pretty, patriarchal idea: I stand between them, the trusting, admiring family, and these explosive stoves that are the terror of their lives. They gather around me in a group and watch me, the capable, all-knowing Head who fears no foreign stove. But there are days when I get tired of going around making up fires.

Nor is it sufficient to understand only one particular stove. The practical foreigner prides himself upon having various stoves adapted to various work. Hitherto I have been speaking only of the stove supposed to be best suited to reception-rooms

and bedrooms. The hall is provided with another sort of stove altogether: an iron stove this, that turns up its nose at coke and potato-peelings. If



But there are days when I get tired of going around and making up fires.

you give it anything else but the best coal it explodes. It is like living surrounded by peppery old colonels, trying to pass a peaceful winter among these passionate stoves. There is a stove in the

kitchen to be used only for roasting: this one will not look at anything else but wood. Give it a bit of coal, meaning to be kind, and before you are out of the room it has exploded. Then there is a trick stove, especially popular in Belgium. It has a little door at the top and another little door at the bottom, and looks like a pepper-castor. Whether it is happy or not depends upon these two little doors. There are times when it feels it wants the bottom door shut and the top door open, or vice versa, or both open at the same time, or both shut,—it is a fussy little stove. Ordinary intelligence does not help you much with this stove. You want to be bred in the country. It is a question of instinct; you have to have Belgian blood in your veins to get on comfortably with it. On the whole, it is a mild little stove, this Belgian pet. It does not often explode; it only gets angry, and throws its cover into the air, and flings hot coals about the room. It lives, generally speaking, inside an iron cupboard with two doors. When you want it you open these doors and pull it out into the room. It works on a swivel. And when you don't want it you try to push it back again, and then the whole thing tumbles over, and the girl throws her hands up to heaven and says: *"Mon Dieu!"* and screams for the cook and the *femme à journée,* and they all three say, *"Mon Dieu!"* and fall upon it with buckets of water. By the time everything has been extinguished you have made up your mind to substitute

for it just the ordinary explosive stove to which you are accustomed.

In your own house you can, of course, open the windows, and thus defeat the foreign stove. The rest of the street thinks you mad, but then the Englishman is considered by all foreigners to be always mad. It is his privilege to be mad. The street thinks no worse of you than it did before, and you can breathe in comfort. But in the railway carriage they don't allow you to be mad. In Europe, unless you are prepared to draw at sight upon the other passengers, throw the conductor out of the window, and take the train in by yourself, it is useless arguing the question of fresh air. The rule abroad is that if any one man objects to the window being open, the window remains closed. He does not quarrel with you; he rings the bell and points out to the conductor that the temperature of the carriage has sunk to little more than ninety degrees Fahrenheit. He thinks a window must be open. The conductor is generally an old soldier; he understands being shot, he understands being thrown out of window, but not the laws of sanitation. If, as I have explained, you shoot him, or throw him out on to the permanent way, that convinces him. He leaves you to discuss the matter with the second conductor, who, by your action, has now, of course, become the first conductor. As there are generally half a dozen of these conductors scattered about the train, the process of educating

them becomes monotonous. You generally end by submitting to the law. Unless you happen to be an American woman. Never did my heart go out

It is useless arguing the question of fresh air.

more gladly to America as a nation than on one spring day travelling from Berne to Vevey. We had been sitting for an hour in an atmosphere that would have rendered a Dante disinclined to notice things. Dante, after ten minutes in that atmosphere, would have lost all interest in the show; he would not have asked questions; he would have whispered to Virgil, "Get me out of this, old man,

there's a good fellow!" The carriage was crowded, chiefly with Germans. Every window was closed, every ventilator shut. The hot air quivered around our feet. Seventeen men and four women were smoking; two children were sucking peppermints; and an old married couple were eating their lunch, consisting, apparently, of garlic.

At the junction the door was thrown open. The foreigner generally opens the door a little way, glides in, and closes it behind him. This was not a foreigner, but an American lady, *en voyage,* accompanied by five other American ladies. They marched in, carrying packages. They could not find six seats together, so they scattered up and down the carriage. The first thing that each woman did, the moment she could get her hands free, was to dash for the nearest window and haul it down. "Astonishes me," said the first woman, "that somebody is not dead in this carriage." Their idea, I think, was that through asphyxiation we had become comatose, and, but for their entrance, would have died unconscious. "It is a current of air that is wanted," said another of the ladies. So they opened the door at the front end of the carriage, and four of them stood outside on the platform, chatting pleasantly and admiring the scenery, while two of them opened the door at the other end and took photographs of the Lake of Geneva. The carriage rose and cursed them in six languages. Bells were rung; conductors came

flying in. It was all of no use. Those American ladies were cheerful but firm. They argued with volubility; they argued standing in the open doorway. The conductors, familiar, no doubt, with the American lady and her ways, shrugged their shoulders and retired. The other passengers undid their bags and bundles and wrapped themselves up in shawls and Jaeger nightshirts. I met the ladies afterward in the Lausanne. They told me they had been condemned to a fine of forty francs apiece. They also explained to me that they had not the slightest intention of paying it.

BEAUTY BY THE BOTTLE

BEAUTY BY THE BOTTLE

PRETTY women are going to have a hard time of it later on. It will serve them right. Hitherto in the world's history they had things far too much their own way. In the future there are going to be no pretty girls—for the simple reason that there will be no plain girls against which to contrast them. Of late I have done some systematic reading of ladies' papers. The plain girl submits to a course of "treatment." In eighteen months she bursts upon society an acknowledged beauty. And it is all done by kindness. One girl writes: "Only a little while ago I used to look at myself in the glass and cry. Now I look at myself and laugh." The letter is accompanied by two photographs of the young lady. I should have cried myself had I seen her as she was at first. She was a stumpy, flat-headed, squat-nosed, cross-eyed thing. She did not even look good. One virtue she appeared to have had, however: it was faith. She believed what the label said and she did exactly what the label told her. She is now a tall, ravishing young person, her only trouble being, I should say, to know what to do with her hair; it reaches to her knees and must be a nuisance to her. She would do better to give some of it

away. Taking this young lady as a text, it means that the girl who declines to be a dream of loveliness does so out of obstinacy. What the raw material may be does not appear to matter. Provided no feature is absolutely missing, the result is one and the same. Arrived at years of descretion, the maiden proceeds to choose the style of beauty she prefers. Will she be a Juno, a Venus, or a Helen? Will she have a Grecian nose or one tip-tilted like the petal of a rose? Let her try the tip-tilted style first. The professor has an idea it is going to be fashionable. If afterward she does not like it, then will be time to try the Grecian. It is difficult to decide these points without experiment. Would the lady like a high forehead or a low forehead? Some ladies like to look intelligent. It is purely a matter of taste. With the Grecian nose, the low broad forehead perhaps goes better. It is more according to precedent. On the other hand, the high, brainy forehead would be more original. It is for the lady herself to select. We come to the question of eyes. The lady fancies a delicate blue, not too pronounced a color—one of those useful shades that go with almost anything. At the same time, there should be depth and passion. The professor understands exactly the sort of eye the lady means. But it will be expensive. There is a cheap quality, but the professor does not recommend it. True that it passes muster by gaslight, but the sunlight shows it up. It lacks tenderness, and at the

price you can hardly expect it to contain much hidden meaning. The professor advises the melting, Oh-George-take-me-in-your-arms-and-still-my-

There is a cheap quality, but the professor does not recommend it.

foolish-fear brand. It costs a little more, but it pays for itself in the end. Perhaps it will be best, now the eye has been fixed upon, to discuss the question of the hair. The professor opens the pattern book. Maybe the lady is of a wilful disposition. She loves to run laughing through the woods during exceptionally rainy weather; or to gallop across

the downs without a hat, her fair ringlets streaming in the wind, the stout old family coachman panting and expostulating in the rear. If one may trust the popular novel, extremely satisfactory husbands have often been secured in this way. You naturally look at a girl who is walking through a wood, laughing heartily for apparently no other reason than because it is raining—who rides at stretch gallop without a hat. If you have nothing else to do, you follow her. It is always on the cards that such a girl may do something really amusing before she gets home. Thus things begin. To a girl of this kind, naturally curly hair is essential. It must be the sort of hair that looks better when it is soaking wet. The bottle of stuff that makes this particular hair to grow may be considered dear, if you think merely of the price. But that is not the way to look at it. What is it going to do for me?—that is what the girl has got to ask herself. It does not pay to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar, as the saying is. If you are going to be a dashing wilful beauty, you must have the hair for it, or the whole scheme falls to the ground. Eyebrows and eyelashes, the professor assumes, the lady would like to match the hair. Too much eccentricity the professor does not agree with: Nature, after all, is the best guide: neatness combined with taste, that is the ideal to be aimed at. The eyebrows are being worn almost straight. The eyelashes long and silky, the professor suggests—as usual, with just the suspicion

of a curl. The professor would also suggest a little less cheekbone. Cheekbones are being worn low this season. Will the lady have a dimpled chin, or does she fancy the clean, square-cut jaw? Maybe

Will the lady have a dimpled chin or does she fancy the clean, square-cut jaw?

the square-cut jaw and the firm, sweet mouth is more suitable for the married woman. It goes well enough with the baby and the tea-urn, and the strong proud man in the background. But for the unmarried girl, the dimpled chin and the rosebud

mouth are, perhaps, on the whole, safer. Some gentlemen are nervous of the firm, square jaw. For the present, at all events, let us keep to the rosebud and the dimple. Complexion! Well, there is only one complexion worth considering—a creamy white, relieved by delicate peach pink. It goes with everything and is always effective. Rich olives, striking pallors—yes, you hear of these things doing well. The professor's experience, however, is that for all-round work you will never improve upon the plain white and pink. It is less liable to get out of order, and is easiest at all times to renew. For the figure, the professor recommends something lithe and supple. Five foot four is a good height, but that is a point that should be discussed first with the dressmaker. For trains five foot six is perhaps preferable. But for the sporting girl who has to wear short frocks five foot six would of course be impossible. The bust and the waist are also points on which the dressmaker should be consulted. Nothing should be done in a hurry. What is the fashion going to be for the next two or three seasons? There are styles demanding that, beginning at the neck, you should come straight out, like a pouter pigeon. There is apparently no difficulty whatever in obtaining this result. But if crinolines, for instance, are likely to come in again—well, the lady has only to imagine it for herself: the effect might be grotesque, suggestive of a walking hour-glass. So, too, with the

waist. For some fashions it is better to have it just a foot below the neck. At other times it is more useful lower down. The lady will kindly think over these details and let the professor know. While one is about it one may as well make a sound job.

It is all so simple, and when you come to think of it, really not so expensive. Age, apparently, makes no difference. A woman is as old as she looks. In future, I take it, there will be no ladies over five and twenty. Wrinkles! Why any lady should still persist in wearing them is a mystery to me. With a moderate amount of care any middle-class woman could save enough out of the housekeeping money in a month to get rid of every one of them. Gray hair! Well, of course, if you cling to gray hair, there is no more to be said. But to ladies who would just as soon have rich wavy brown or black or a delicate shade of gold I would point out that there are one hundred and forty-seven inexpensive lotions on the market, any one of which, rubbed gently into the head with a tooth-brush (not too hard) just before going to bed, will, to use a colloquialism, do the trick. Are you too stout, or are you too thin? All you have to do is to say which and enclose stamps. Like the two cakes that Alice found in Wonderland, one prescription makes you bigger, the other prescription makes you smaller. But do not make a mistake and send for the wrong recipe. If you are already too thin, you

might, in consequence, suddenly disappear before you found out your mistake. One very stout lady I knew worked at herself for eighteen months and got stouter every day. This discouraged her so much that she gave up trying. No doubt she had made a muddle and had sent for the wrong bottle; but she would not listen to further advice. She said she was tired of the whole thing. In future years there will be no need for a young man to look about him for a wife; he will take the nearest girl, tell her his ideal, and if she really cares for him she will go to the shop and have herself fixed up to pattern. In certain Eastern countries I believe something of this kind is done. A gentleman desirous of adding to his family sends around the neighborhood the weight and size of his favorite wife, hinting that if another can be found of the same proportions there is room for her. Fathers walk around among their daughters, choose the most likely specimen, and have her fattened up. That is their brutal Eastern way of doing it. Out West we shall be more delicate. Match-making mothers will probably revive the old confession-book. Eligible bachelors will be invited to fill in a page. "Your favorite height in women." "Your favorite measurement around the waist." "Do you like brunettes or blondes,"—and so on. The choice will be left to the girls. "I think Henry Arthur is just too sweet for words," the eldest girl will murmur to herself after the ball, "so tender, so likely

In from six months to a year she will burst upon him, the perfect She.

to be true. Ah! she will be a happy woman who gets him, whoever she may be." Gently, coyly, with her quick woman's tact she will draw from him his ideal of what a woman should be. In from six months to a year she will burst upon him, the perfect She: height, complexion, weight right to a T. He will clasp her in his arms. "At last," he will cry, "I have found her, the woman of my dreams." And if he does not change his mind, and the bottles do not begin to lose their effect, there will be every chance that they will be happy ever afterward. Might not Science go even still further? Why rest satisfied with making a world of merely beautiful women? Cannot Science, while she is about it, make them all good and clever? Hang the expense! Speaking as a family man myself, I am willing to put my hand in my pocket and bear my share of the cost. I feel sure that, if the case were put clearly, fathers and husbands and brothers would respond without a murmur. I do not apologize for the suggestion. I used to think all women beautiful and good; it did not occur to me that they could be improved upon in either respect. It is their own papers that have disillusioned me. I used to look at this lady or at that—shyly, when nobody seemed to be noticing me—and think how fair she was, how stately! Now I only wonder who is her chemist. They used to tell me, when I was a little boy, that girls were made of sugar and spice. I know better now. I have read the

prescription. When I was quite a young man I used to sit in a dark corner and listen with swelling heart while people at the piano told me where little girl babies got their wonderful eyes from, of the things they did to them in heaven that gave them dimples. Ah me, I wish now I had never come across

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those ladies' papers. I know the shop where they make those dimples; I have passed it and looked in. I thought they were produced by angel's kisses, but there was not an angel about the place, that I could see. Perhaps I have also been deceived as regards their goodness. Maybe all women are not so per-

fect as in the popular short story they appear to be. That is why I suggest that Science should proceed still further, make them all as beautiful in mind as she is now able to make them in body. May we not live to see in the advertisement columns of the ladies' paper of the future a portrait of a young girl sulking in a corner. *Before taking the lotion!* The same girl dancing among her little brothers and sisters, shedding sunlight through the home. *After the first three bottles!* May we not have the Caudle Mixture: one tablespoonful at bedtime guaranteed to make the lady murmur, "Good-night, dear, hope you'll sleep well," and at once to fall asleep, her lips parted in a smile? Maybe some specialist of the future will advertise "Mind Massage, warranted to remove from the most obstinate subject all traces of envy, hatred, and malice." And, when Science has done everything possible for women, there might be no harm in her turning her attention to us men. Her idea at present seems to be that we are too beautiful, physically and morally, to need improvement. Personally, there are one or two points about which I should like to consult her.

RIDDLE OF THE SERVANT GIRL

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I AM glad to see, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "that the Women's Domestic Guild of America has succeeded in solving the servant-girl problem,—none to soon, one might almost say." "Ah!" said Mrs. Wilkins, as she took the cover off the bacon and gave an extra polish to the mustard-pot with her apron, "they are clever people over there. Leastways, so I've always 'eard." "This, their latest, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "I am inclined to regard as their greatest triumph. My hope is that the Women's Domestic Guild of America, when it has finished with the United States and Canada, will perhaps see its way to establishing a branch in England. There are ladies of my acquaintance who would welcome, I feel sure, any really satisfactory solution of the problem." "Well, good luck to it, is all I say," responded Mrs. Wilkins, an' if it makes all the gals contented with their places, an' all the mistresses satisfied with what they've got an' 'appy in their minds, why, God bless it!" "The mistake hitherto," I said, "from what I read, appears to have been that the right servant was not sent to the right place. What the Women's Domestic Guild of

America proposes to do is to find the right servant for the right place. You see the difference, don't you, Mrs. Wilkins?" "That's the secret!" agreed Mrs. Wilkins. "They don't anticipate any difficulty in gettin' that right sort o' gal, I take it?" "I gather not, Mrs. Wilkins," I replied. "There must be plenty of girls of the right sort." Mrs. Wilkins is of a pessimistic turn of mind, as I think I have before stated. "I'm not so sure about that," she said, "the Almighty don't seem to 'ave made too many o' that sort. Unless these American ladies that you speak of are goin' to start a factory o' their own, I am afraid there's disappointment in store for 'em." "Don't throw cold water on the idea before it is fairly started, Mrs. Wilkins," I pleaded. "Well, sir," said Mrs. Wilkins, "I've been a gal myself in service; an' in my time I've 'ad a few mistresses of my own, an' I've 'eard a good deal about others. There are ladies an' ladies, as you may know, sir, an' some of them, if they aren't exactly angels, are about as near to it as can be looked for in this climate, an' they are not the ones that do most of the complainin'. But as for the average mistress—well it ain't a gal she wants, it's a plaster image, without any nat'ral innards—a sort of thing as ain't 'uman an' ain't to be found in 'uman natur'. An' then she'd grumble at it if it didn't 'appen to be able to be in two places at once." "You fear that the standard for that 'right girl' is likely to be set a trifle

too high, Mrs. Wilkins," I suggested. "That right gal, accordin' to the notions of some of 'em," retorted Mrs. Wilkins, "'er place ain't down 'ere among us mere mortals; 'er place is up in 'eaven

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with a 'arp an' a golden crown. There's my niece, Emma. I don't say she's a saint, but a better-'earted, 'arder-working gal at twenty pound a year you don't expect to find, unless maybe you're a natural-born fool that can't 'elp yourself. She wanted a place. She 'ad been 'ome for nearly six months, nursin' 'er old father, as 'ad been down all the winter with rheumatic fever; an' 'ard-put to it she was for a few clothes. You 'ear 'em talk

about gals as insists on an hour a day for practisin' the piano, an' the right to invite their young man to spend the evenin' with 'em in the drawin'-room. Perhaps it's meant to be funny; I ain't come across that type o' gal myself, outside the pictures in the comic papers; an' I'll never believe, till I see 'er myself, that anybody else 'as. They sent 'er from the registry office to a lady at Clapton. 'I 'ope you're good at gettin' up early in the mornin'?' says the lady; 'I like a gal as rises cheerfully to 'er work.' 'Well, ma'am?' says Emma, 'I can't say as I've got a passion for it. But it's one o' those things that 'as to be done, an' I guess I've learnt the trick.' 'I'm a great believer in early risin',' says my lady. 'In the mornin' one is always fresher for one's work. My 'usband an' the younger children breakfast at 'arf-past seven; myself an' my elder daughter 'ave our breakfast in bed at eight.' 'That'll be all right, ma'am,' says Emma. 'An' I 'ope,' says the lady, 'you're of a amiable disposition. Some gals, when you ring the bell, come up looking so disagreeable, one almost wishes one didn't want them.' 'Well, it ain't a thing,' explains Emma, 'as makes you want to burst out laughin', 'earin' the bell go off for the twentieth time, an' 'avin' suddenly to put down your work at, perhaps, a critical moment. Some ladies don't seem able to reach down their 'at for themselves.' 'I 'ope you're not impertinent,' says the lady. 'If there's one thing I object to in a

servant it's impertinence.' 'We none of us like bein' answered back,' says Emma, 'more particularly when we're not in the wrong. But I know my place, ma'am, an' I shan't give you no lip. It

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always leads to less trouble, I find, keepin' your mouth shut, rather than openin' it.' 'Are you fond of children?' asks my lady. 'It depends upon the children,' says Emma, 'there are some I 'ave 'ad to do with as made the day seem pleasanter, and I've come across others as I could 'ave parted from at any moment without tears.' 'I like a gal,' says the lady, 'who is nat'rally fond of children; it shows

a good character.' 'How many are there of 'em?' says Emma. 'Four of 'em,' answers the lady, 'but you won't 'ave much to do except with the two youngest. The great thing with young children is to surround them with good examples. Are you a Christian?' asks my lady. 'That is what I am generally called,' says Emma. 'Every other Sunday evenin' out is my rule,' says the lady, 'but of course I shall expect you to go to church.' 'Do you mean in my time, ma'am?' says Emma, 'or in yours?' 'I mean on your evenin', of course,' says the lady. 'How else could you go?' 'Well, ma'am,' says Emma. 'I like to see my people now an' then.' 'There are better things,' says the lady, 'than seein' what you call your people; an' I should not care to take a girl into my 'ouse as put 'er pleasure before 'er religion. You're not engaged, I 'ope?' 'Walkin' out, ma'am, do you mean?' says Emma. 'No, ma'am, there is nobody I've got in my mind—not just at present.' 'I never will take a gal,' explains the lady, 'who is engaged. I find it distracts 'er attention from 'er work. An' I must insist, if you come to me,' continues my lady, 'that you get yourself another 'at an' jacket. If there's one thing I object to in a servant it is a disposition to cheap finery.' 'Er own daughter was sittin' there beside 'er, with 'alf a dozen silver bangles on 'er wrist, an' a sort of thing 'anging around 'er neck as, 'ad it been real, would 'ave been worth perhaps a thou-

san' pounds. But Emma wanted a job, so she kep' 'er thoughts to 'erself. 'I can put these things by an' get myself somethin' else,' she says, 'if you don't mind, ma'am, advancin' me somethin' out

"'If there's one thing I object to in a servant it is a disposition to cheap finery.'"

o' my first three months' wages. I'm afraid my account at the bank is a bit overdrawn.' The lady whispered somethin' to 'er daughter. 'I am afraid, on thinkin' it over,' she says, 'that you won't suit, after all. You don't look serious enough. I feel sure, from the way you do your 'air,' says my lady, 'there's a frivolous side to your nature.' So Emma came away, an' was not, on the 'ole, too sorry." "But do they get servants to come to them—this type of mistress, do you think,

Mrs. Wilkins?" I asked. "They get them all right," said Mrs. Wilkins, "an' if it's a decent gal, it makes a bad gal of 'er, that ever afterward looks upon every mistress as 'er enemy an' acts accordingly. An' if she ain't a nat'rally good girl, it makes 'er worse, an' then you 'ear what awful things gals are. I don't say it's an easy problem," continued Mrs. Wilkins, "it's just like marriages. The good mistress gets 'old of a bad servant, an' the bad mistress, as often as not, is lucky." "But how is it," I argued, "that in hotels, for instance, the service is excellent; and the girls, generally speaking, seem contented? The work is hard and the wages not much better, if as good." "Ah," said Mrs. Wilkins, "you 'ave 'it the right nail on the 'ead there, sir. They go into the 'otels an' work like niggers, knowin' that if a single thing goes wrong they'll be bully-ragged an' sworn at till they don't know whether they're standin' on their 'ead or their 'eels. But they 'ave their hours; the gal knows when 'er work's done, an' when the clock strikes she's a 'uman bein' once again. She's got that moment to look forward to all day, an' it keeps 'er goin'. In private service there is no moment in the day to 'ope for. If the lady is reasonable she ain't overworked; but nohow can she ever feel she is her own mistress, free to come an' go, to wear 'er bit of finery, to 'ave 'er bit of fun. She works from six in the mornin' till eleven or twelve at night, an' then she

only goes to bed provided she ain't wanted. She don't belong to 'erself at all; it's that that irritates them." "I see your point, Mrs. Wilkins," I said, "and, of course, in a house where two or three servants were kept, some such plan might easily be arranged. The girl who commenced work one month at six o'clock in the morning might consider herself free at six o'clock in the evening, and be perfectly free. What she does with herself, how she dresses herself, in her own time, that is her affair. What church the clerk or the workman belongs to, what company he keeps, is no concern of the firm. In such matters, mistresses, I am inclined to think, saddle themselves with a responsibility for which there is no need. If the girl behaves herself while in the house and does her work, there the contract ends. The mistress who thinks it her duty to combine the rôles of employer and maiden aunt is naturally resented. The next month the girl would change her hours from twelve till twelve and her fellow servant would enjoy the 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. shift. But how do you propose to deal, Mrs. Wilkins, with the smaller *ménage,* that employs only one servant?" "Well, sir," said Mrs. Wilkins, "it seems to me simple enough. Ladies talk pretty about the dignity of labor, an' are never tired of pointing out why gals should prefer domestic service to all other kinds of work. Suppose they practice what they preach. In the 'ouse where there's only the master an' the

mistress, an' say a couple o' small children, let the lady take 'er turn. After all, it's only 'er duty, same as the office or the shop is the man's. Where, on the other hand, there are biggish boys an' gals about the place, well, it wouldn't do them any 'arm to be taught to play a little less an' to look after themselves a little more. It's just arrangin' things —that's all that's wanted." "You remind me of a family I once knew, Mrs. Wilkins," I said; "it consisted of the usual father and mother and of five sad healthy girls. They kept two servants—or, rather, they never kept any servants; they lived always looking for servants, breaking their hearts over servants, packing servants off at a moment's notice, standing disconsolately looking after servants who had packed themselves off at a moment's notice, wondering generally what the world was coming to. It occurred to me at the time that, without much trouble, they could have lived a peaceful life without servants. The eldest girl was learning painting, and seemed unable to learn anything else. It was poor sort of painting; she noticed it herself. But she seemed to think that, if she talked a lot about it and thought of nothing else, that somehow it would all come right. The second girl played the violin. She played it from early morning till late evening, and friends fell away from them. There wasn't a spark of talent in the family, but they all had a notion that a vague longing to be admired was just the same as genius. Another

daughter fancied she would like to be an actress and screamed all day in the attic. The fourth wrote poetry on a typewriter, and wondered why nobody seemed to want it; while the fifth one suffered from

"She screamed all day in the attic."

a weird belief that smearing wood with a red-hot sort of poker was a thing worth doing for its own sake. All of them seemed willing enough to work, provided only that it was work of no use to any living soul. With a little sense, and the occasional assistance of a charwoman, they could have led a merrier life." "If I was giving away

secrets," said Mrs. Wilkins, "I'd say to the mistresses, 'Show yourselves able to be independent.' It's because the gals know that the mistresses can't do without them that they sometimes give themselves airs."

WAGNERISTIC STAGE MANNERS

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THE argument of the late Herr Wagner was that grand opera—the music-drama, as he called it—included, and therefore did away with the necessity for, all other arts. Music in all its branches, of course, it provides; so much I will concede to the late Herr Wagner. There are times, I confess, when my musical yearnings might shock the late Herr Wagner—times when I feel unequal to following three distinct themes at one and the same instant. "Listen," whispers the Wagnerian enthusiast to me, "the cornet has now the Brunnhilda motive." It seems to me in my then state of depravity as if the cornet had even more than this the matter with him. "The second violins," continues the Wagnerian enthusiast, "are carrying on the Wotan theme." That they are "carrying on" goes without saying; the players' faces are streaming with perspiration. "The brass," explains my friend—his object is to cultivate my ear—"is accompanying the singers." I should have said drowning them. There are occasions when I can rave about Wagner with the best of them. High-class moods come to all of us. The difference between the really-class man and us commonplace workaday men is the difference be-

tween, say, the eagle and the barnyard chicken. I am the barnyard chicken. I have my wings. There are ecstatic moments when I feel I want to spurn the sordid earth and soar into the realms of art. I do fly a little, but my body is heavy, and I only get as far as the fence. After a while I find it lonesome sitting on the fence, and I hop down again among my fellows. Listening to Wagner, during such temporary Philistinic mood, my sense of fair play is outraged. A lone, lorn woman stands upon the stage trying to make herself heard. She has to do this sort of thing for her living; maybe an invalid mother—younger brothers and sisters—are dependent upon her. One hundred and forty men, all armed with powerful instruments, well-organized, and most of them looking well-fed, combine to make it impossible for a single note of that poor woman's voice to be heard above their din. I see her standing there, opening and shutting her mouth, getting redder and redder in the face. She is singing, one feels sure of it; one could hear her if only those one hundred and forty men would ease up for a minute. She makes one mighty, supreme effort; above the banging of the drums, the blare of the trumpets, the shrieking of the strings, that last despairing note is distinctly heard. She has won, but the victory has cost her dear. She sinks down fainting on the stage and is carried off by supers. Chivalrous indignation has made it difficult for me to keep my seat watching the unequal

contest. My instinct was to leap the barrier, hurl the bald-headed chief of her enemies from his high chair, and lay about me with the trombone or clari-

One could hear her if only those one hundred and forty men would ease up for a minute.

net—whichever might have come the easier to my snatch. "You cowardly lot of bullies," I have wanted to cry, "are you not ashamed of yourselves? A hundred and forty of you against one, and that one a still beautiful and comparatively speaking youngish lady. Be quiet for a moment, can't you,

and give the poor girl a chance." A lady of my acquaintance says that sitting out a Wagnerian opera seems to her like listening to a singer accompanied by four orchestras playing different tunes at the same time. As I have said, there are times when Wagner carries me along with him, when I exult in the crash and whirl of his contending harmonies. But, alas, there are those other moods—those after-dinner moods—when my desire is for something distinctly resembling a tune. Still, there are other composers of grand opera besides Wagner. I grant, with the late Herr Wagner, that, so far as music is concerned, opera can supply us with all we can need.

But it was also Wagner's argument that grand opera could supply us with acting, and there I am compelled to disagree with him. Wagner thought that the arts of acting and singing could be combined. I have seen artists the great man had trained himself. As singers they left nothing to be desired, but the acting in grand opera has never yet impressed me. Wagner never succeeded in avoiding the operatic convention, and nobody else ever will. When the operatic lover meets his sweetheart he puts her in a corner, and, turning his back upon her, comes down to the footlights and tells the audience how he adores her. When he has finished, he, in his turn, retires into the corner, and she comes down and tells the audience that she is simply mad about him. Overcome with joy at finding she

really cares for him, he comes down "right" and says that this is the happiest moment of his life; and she stands "left," twelve feet away from him,

He comes down to the footlights and tells the audience how he adores her.

and has the presentiment that all this sort of thing is much too good to last. They go off together backward, side by side. If there is any love-making, such as I understand by the term, it is done "off." This is not my idea of acting. But I do not see how you are going to substitute for it anything more natural. When you are singing at the top of your voice, you don't want a heavy woman hanging around your neck. When you are killing a man and warbling about it at the same time, you

don't want him fooling around you defending himself. You want him to have a little reasonable patience and to wait in his proper place till you have

When you are singing you don't want a heavy woman hanging around your neck.

finished telling him, or rather telling the crowd, how much you hate and despise him. When the proper time comes—and if he is where you expect to find him while thinking of your upper C—you will hit him lightly on the shoulder with your sword, and then he can die to his own particular tune. If you have been severely wounded in battle, or in any

sort of a row, and have got to sing a long ballad before you finally expire, you don't want to have to think how a man would really behave who knew he had only got a few minutes to live and was feeling bad about it. The chances are that he would not want to sing at all. The woman who really loved him would not encourage him to sing. She would want him to keep quiet while she moved herself about a bit, in case there was anything that could be done for him. If a bloodthirsty mob is climbing the stairs after you, you do not want to stand upright with your arms stretched out, a good eighteen inches from that door, while you go over, at some length, the varied incidents leading up to the annoyance. If your desire were to act naturally you would push against that door for all you were worth, and yell for somebody to bring you a chest of drawers and a bedstead—things like that—to pile up against it. If you were a king, and were giving a party, you would not want your guests to fix you up at the other end of the room and leave you there, with nobody to talk to but your own wife, while they turned their backs upon you and had a long and complicated dance all to themselves. You would want to be in it; you would want to let them know that you were king. In acting, all these little points have to be considered. In opera, everything is rightly sacrificed to musical necessity. I have seen the young, enthusiastic opera-singer who thought that he or she could act and sing at

the same time. The experienced artist takes the centre of the stage and husbands his resources. Whether he is supposed to be indignant because somebody has killed his mother, or cheerful because he is going out to fight his country's foes, who are only waiting till he has finished singing before attacking the town, he leaves it to the composer to make clear.

Also, it was Herr Wagner's idea that the back cloth would leave the opera-goer indifferent to the picture gallery. The castle on the rock, accessible only by balloon, in which every window lights up simultaneously and instantaneously one minute after sunset, while the full moon is rushing up the sky at the pace of a champion comet. That wonderful sea that suddenly opens and swallows up the ship. Those snow-clad mountains, over which the shadow of the hero passes like a threatening cloud. The grand old château, trembling in the wind. What need, will ask the opera-goer of the future, of your Turners and your Corots, when for prices ranging from a shilling upward, we can have a dozen pictures such as these rolled up and down before us every evening. But perhaps the most daring hope of all was the dream that came to Herr Wagner that his opera-singers, his grouped choruses, would eventually satisfy the craving of the public for high-class statuary. I am not quite sure that the general public does care much for statuary. I do not know whether the idea has ever occurred to the Anarchist, but were

I myself organizing secret committee meetings for unholy purposes I should invite my comrades to meet in that section of the local museum devoted to statuary. I can conceive of no place where we should be freer from prying eyes and listening ears. A select few, however, do appreciate statuary, and such, I am inclined to think, will not be weaned from their passion by the contemplation of the opera-singer in his or her various quaint costumes. And even if the tenor always satisfied our ideal of Apollo, and the soprano were always as sylph-like as she is described in the libretto, even then I should doubt the average operatic chorus being regarded by the connoisseur as a cheap and pleasant substitute for a bas-relief from the Elgin marbles. The great thing required of the operatic chorus is experience. The young and giddy-pated the chorus-master has no use for. The sober, honest, industrious lady or gentleman with a knowledge of music is very properly his ideal.

The chorus always fascinates me. I watch it while it is on the stage in preference to following the principals. What I admire about it chiefly is its unity. The whole village dresses alike. In wicked worldly villages there is a rivalry, a competition, leading to heartburn and jealousy. One lady comes out suddenly, on say a Bank Holiday, in a fetching blue that conquers every male heart. Next holiday her rival cuts her out with a green hat. In the operatic village it must be that the

girls gather together beforehand to arrange this thing. There is probably a meeting called. "The dear Count's wedding" announces the charwoman, "you will be all pleased to hear, has been fixed for the fourteenth, at eleven o'clock in the morning. The entire village will be assembled at ten-thirty to await the return of the bridal *cortège* from the church and offer its felicitations. Married ladies

The chorus always fascinates me.

will, of course, come accompanied by their husbands. Unmarried ladies must each bring a male partner as near their own height as possible. Fortunately, in this village, the number of males is exactly equal to that of the females, so that uniformity can be maintained. The children will organize

themselves into an independent body and will group themselves picturesquely. "It has been thought advisable," continues the charwoman, "for reasons that I need not enter into here, that the village should meet the dear Count and his bride at some spot not too far removed from the local alehouse. The costume to be worn by the ladies will consist of a short pink skirt terminating at the knee and ornamented with festoons of flowers; above will be worn a bolero in mauve silk, without sleeves, and cut *décolleté*. The shoes should be of yellow satin over flesh-colored stockings. Ladies who are 'out' will wear pearl necklaces, and a simple device in emeralds to decorate the hair. Thank God, we can all of us afford it, and, provided the weather holds up and nothing unexpected happens —he is not what I call a lucky man, our Count, and it is always as well to be prepared for possibilities— well, I think we may look forward to a really pleasant day." It cannot be done, Herr Wagner, believe me. You cannot substitute the music drama for all the arts combined. The object to be aimed at by the wise composer should be to make us, while listening to his music, forgetful of all remaining artistic considerations.

EXASPERATED HERO AND HEROINE

EXASPERATED HERO AND HEROINE

WHEN I was younger, reading the popular novel used to make me sad. I find it vexes others also. I was talking to a bright young girl upon the subject not so very long ago. "I just hate the girl in the novel," she confessed. "She makes me feel real bad. If I don't think of her I feel pleased with myself, and good; but when I read about her—well, I'm crazy. I would not mind her being smart, sometimes—we can all of us say the right thing now and then. This girl says them straight away, all the time. She don't have to dig for them, even; they come crowding out of her. There never happens a time when she stands there feeling like a fool and knowing that she looks it. As for her hair; upon my word, there are days when I believe it is a wig. I'd like to get behind her and give it just one pull. It curls of its own accord. She don't seem to have any trouble with it. Look at this mop of mine. I've been working at it for three-quarters of an hour this morning; and now I would not laugh, not if you were to tell me the funniest thing you'd ever heard, for fear it would come down again. As for her clothes, they make me tired. She don't possess a frock that does not

fit her to perfection; she doesn't have to think about them. You would imagine she went into the garden and picked them off a tree. She just slips it on and comes down, and then—my stars! All the other women in the room may just as well go to bed and get a good night's rest for all the chance they've got. It isn't that she's beautiful. From what they tell you about her, you might fancy her a freak. Looks don't appear to matter to her; she gets there anyhow. I tell you, she just makes me boil." Allowing for the difference between the masculine and the feminine outlook, this is precisely how I used to feel when reading of the hero. He was not always good; sometimes he hit the villain harder than he had intended, and then he was sorry—when it was too late—blamed himself severely, and subscribed toward the wreath. Like the rest of us he made mistakes; occasionally married the wrong girl. But how well he did everything!—does still for the matter of that, I believe. Take it that he condescends to play cricket! He never scores less than a hundred—does not know how to score less than a hundred, wonders how it could be done, supposing, for example, you had an appointment and wanted to catch an early train. I used to play cricket myself, but I could always stop at ten or twenty. There have been times when I have stopped at even less. It is the same with everything he puts his hand to. Either he does not care for boating at all, or, as a

matter of course, he pulls stroke in the University boat race; and then takes the train on to Henley and wins the Diamond Sculls so easily that it hardly seems worth while for the other fellow to have started. Were I living in Novel-land, and had I entered for the Diamond Sculls, I should put it to my opponent before the word was given to us to go: "One minute!" I should have called out to him. "Are you the hero of this novel, or, like myself only one of the minor characters. Because, if you are the hero, you go on; don't you wait for me. I shall just pull as far as the boathouse and get myself a cup of tea." There is no sense of happy medium about the hero of the popular novel. He cannot get astride a horse without its going off and winning a steeplechase against the favorite. The crowd in Novel-land appears to have no power of observation. It worries itself about the odds, discusses records, reads the nonsense published by the sporting papers. Were I to find myself on a racecourse in Novel-land I should not trouble about the unessential; I should go up to the Bookie who looked as if he had the most money, and should say to him, "Don't shout so loud; you are making yourself hoarse. Just listen to me. Who's the hero of this novel? Oh, that's he, is it? The heavy-looking man on the little brown horse that keeps coughing and is suffering apparently from bone spavin. Well, what are the odds against his winning by ten lengths?—A thousand to one!

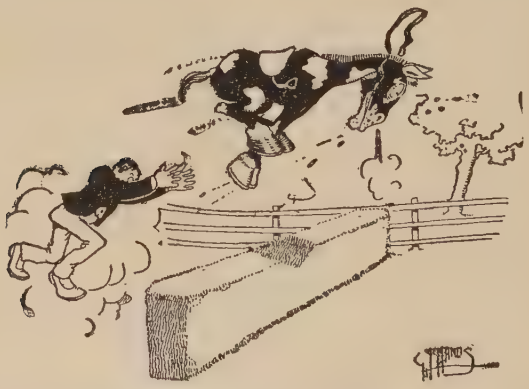
Very well! Have you got a bag? Good! Here's twenty-seven pounds in gold and eighteen shillings in silver. Coat and waistcoat, say another ten shillings. Shirt and trousers—it's all right, I've got my pyjamas on underneath—say seven and six. Boots—we won't quarrel—make it five bob. That's twenty-nine pounds and sixpence, isn't it? In addition here's a mortgage on the family estate, which I've had made out in blank, an I.O.U. for fourteen pounds which has been owing to me now for some time, and this bundle of securities which, strictly speaking, belong to my Aunt Jane. You keep that little lot till after the race, and we will call it, in round figures, five hundred pounds." That single afternoon would thus bring me in five hundred thousand pounds—provided the Bookie did not blow his brains out. Backers in Novel-land do not seem to me to know their way about. If the hero of the popular novel swims at all, it is not like an ordinary human being that he does it. You never meet him in a swimming-bath; he never pays ninepence, like the rest of us, for a machine. He goes out at uncanny hours, generally accompanied by a lady friend with whom the while he talks poetry and cracks jokes. Some of us, when we try to talk in the sea, fill ourselves full with salt water. This chap lies on his back and carols, and the wild waves, seeing him, go around the other way. At billiards he can give the average sharper forty in a hundred. He does not really want to play; he does it to teach

these bad men a lesson. He has not handled a cue for years. He picked up the game when a young man in Australia, and it seems to have lingered with

He does not have to get up early and worry dumb-bells in his night shirt.

him. He does not have to get up early and worry dumb-bells in his nightshirt; he just lies on a sofa in an elegant attitude and muscle comes to him. If his horse declines to jump a hedge, he slips down off the animal's back and throws the poor thing over; it saves argument. If he gets cross and puts his shoulder to the massive oaken door, we know there

is going to be work next morning for the carpenter. Maybe he is a party belonging to the Middle Ages. Then, when he reluctantly challenges the crack fencer of Europe to a duel, our instinct is to call out and warn his opponent, "You silly fool," one feels one wants to say, "why, it is the hero of the novel. You take a friend's advice while you are still alive, and get out of it anyway—anyhow. Apologize—hire



He slips down off the animal's back and throws the poor thing over.

a horse and cart, do something. You're not going to fight a duel, you're going to commit suicide!" If the hero is a modern young man and has not got a father—or has only something not worth calling a father, then he comes across a library—anybody's library does for him. He passes Sir Walter Scott and the "Arabian Nights," and makes a bee-line for Plato: it seems to be an instinct with him. By help

of a dictionary he worries it out in the original Greek. This gives him a passion for Greek. When he has romped through the Greek classics,

We know there is going to be work next morning for the carpenter.

he plays about among the Latins. He spends most of his spare time in that library and forgets to go

home to tea. That is the sort of boy he is. How I used to hate him! If he has a proper sort of father, then he goes to college. He does not work; there is no need for him to work; everything seems to come to him! That was another grievance of mine against him. I always had to work a good deal, and very little came of it. He fools around doing things that other men would be "sent down" for; but in his case the professors love him for it all the more. He is the sort of man that can't do wrong. A fortnight before the examination he ties a wet towel around his head. That is all we hear about it. It seems to be the towel that does it. Maybe, if the towel is not quite up to its work, he will help things on by drinking gallons of strong tea. The tea and the towel combined are irresistible; the result is always the Senior Wranglership. I used to believe in that wet towel and that strong tea. Lord! the things I used to believe when I was young. They would make an Encyclopædia of Useless Knowledge. I wonder if the author of the popular novel has ever tried work with a wet towel around his or her head. I have. It is difficult enough to move a yard balancing a dry towel. A heathen Turk may have it in his blood to do so; the ordinary Christian has not got the trick of it. To carry about a wet towel around one's head needs a trained acrobat. Every few minutes the wretched thing works loose. In darkness and in misery you struggle to get your head out of a clammy towel that clings to you almost

with passion. Brain power is wasted inventing names for that towel—names expressive of your feelings with regard to it. Further time is taken up before the glass, fixing the thing afresh. You return to your books in the wrong temper: the water trickles down your nose, runs in little rivulets down your back. Until you have finally flung the towel out of window and rubbed yourself dry, work is impossible. The strong tea always gave me indigestion and made me sleepy. Until I had got over the effects of the tea, attempts at study were useless. But the thing that still irritates me most against the hero of the popular novel is the ease with which he learns a modern foreign language. Were he a German waiter, a Swiss barber, or a Polish photographer, I would not envy him: these sort of people do not have to learn a language. My idea is that they boil down a dictionary and take two tablespoonfuls each night before going to bed. By the time the bottle is finished they have the language well into their system. But he is not. He is just an ordinary Anglo-Saxon, and I don't believe in him. I walk about for years, with dictionaries in my pocket. Weird-looking ladies and gentlemen gesticulate and rave at me for months. I hide myself in lonely places, repeating idioms to myself out loud, in the hope that by this means they will come readily to me if ever I want them, which I never do. After all this, I don't seem to know very much. This irritating ass, who has never left his native

suburb, suddenly makes up his mind to travel on the Continent. I find him in the next chapter engaged in complicated psychological argument with French or German savants. It appears—the author had forgot to mention it before—that one summer a French, or German, or Italian refugee, as the case may happen to be, came to live in the hero's street; thus it is that the hero is able to talk fluently in the native language of that unhappy refugee. I remember a melodrama visiting a country town where I was staying. The heroine and the child were sleeping peacefully in the customary attic. For some reason not quite clear to me the villain had set fire to the house. He had been complaining through the three preceding acts of the heroine's coldness: maybe it was with some idea of warning her. Escape by way of the staircase was impossible. Each time the poor girl opened the door a flame came in and nearly burned her hair off. It seemed to have been waiting for her. "Thank God!" said the lady hastily, wrapping the child in a sheet, "that I was brought up a wire-walker." Without a moment's hesitation she opened the attic window and took the nearest telegraph wire to the opposite side of the street. In the same way, apparently, the hero of the popular novel, finding himself stranded in a foreign land, suddenly recollects that once upon a time he met a refugee, and at once begins to talk. I have met refugees myself: the only thing that they have ever taught me is not to leave my brandy flask

about. I don't believe in these heroes and heroines that cannot keep quiet in a foreign language they taught themselves in an Old-World library. My fixed idea is that they muddle along like the rest of us, surprised that so few people understand them,

Brilliant conversations with foreign philosophers.

and begging every one they meet not to talk so quickly. These brilliant conversations with foreign philosophers! These passionate interviews with foreign countesses; they fancy they have had them. I crossed once with an English lady from Boulogne

to Folkestone. At Folkestone a little French girl—anxious about her train—asked us a simple question. My companion replied to it with an ease that astonished herself. The little French girl vanished; my companion sighed. "It's so odd," said my companion, "but I seem to know quite a lot of French the moment I get back to England."

THE MACULATED HEROINE

THE MACULATED HEROINE

WHAT is wrong with marriage anyhow? I find myself pondering this question so often, when reading high-class literature. I put it to myself again the other evening, during a performance of Faust. Why could not Faust have married the girl? I would not have married her myself for any consideration; but that is not the argument. Faust, apparently, could not see anything amiss with her. Both of them were mad about each other. Yet the idea of a quiet, unostentatious marriage with a week's honeymoon, say in Vienna, followed by a neat little cottage *orné,* not too far from Nürnberg, so that their friends could have come out to them, never seems to have occurred to either of them. There could have been a garden, and Marguerite might have kept chickens and a cow. That sort of girl, brought up to hard work and by no means too well educated, is all the better for having something to do. Later, with the gradual arrival of the family, a good all-round woman might have been hired in, to assist. Faust, of course, would have had his study and got to work again; that would have kept him out of further mischief. The idea that a brainy man, his age, was going to be happy with

nothing to do all day but fool around after a petticoat, was ridiculous from the beginning. Valentine—a good fellow Valentine, with nice ideas—

A quiet, unostentatious marriage with a week's honeymoon in Vienna.

would have spent his Saturdays to Mondays with them. Over a pipe and a glass of wine he and Faust would have discussed the local politics. He would have danced the children on his knee, have told them tales about the war—taught the elder boy to shoot. Faust, with a practical man like Valentine to help him, would probably have invented a new gun. Valentine would have got it taken up. Things might have come of it. Sybil, in course of time, would have married and settled down—perhaps have

taken a little house near to them; watched Marguerite growing stout. He and Marguerite would have joked—when Mrs. Sybil was not around—about his early infatuation. The old mother would have toddled over from Nürnberg—not too often, just for the day. The picture grows upon one the more

Over a pipe and a glass of wine he and Faust would have discussed the local politics.

one thinks of it. Why did it never occur to them? There would have been a bit of a bother with the Old Man. I can imagine Mephistopheles being upset about it, thinking himself swindled. Of course if that was the reason—if Faust said to himself: "I

should like to marry the girl, but I won't do it: it would not be fair to the Old Man; he has been to a lot of trouble working this thing up; in common gratitude I cannot turn round now and behave like a decent, sensible man. It would not be playing the game." If this was the way Faust looked at the matter there is nothing more to be said. Indeed, it shows him in a rather fine light, noble, if quixotic. If on the other hand he looked at the question from the point of view of himself and the girl, I think the thing might have been managed. All one had to do in those days when one wanted to get rid of the Devil was to show him a sword-hilt. Faust and Marguerite could be slipped into a church one morning, and have kept him out of the way with a sword-hilt till the ceremony was through. They might have hired a small boy. "You see the gentleman in red. Well, he wants us and we don't want him. That is the only difference between us. Now, you take this sword, and when you see him coming show him the hilt. Don't hurt him; just show him the sword and shake your head. He will understand." The Old Gentleman's expression, when subsequently Faust presented him to Marguerite, would have been interesting. "Allow me! My wife. My dear, a—— a friend of mine. You may remember meeting him that night at your aunt's." As I have said, there would have been ructions; but I do not myself see what could have been done. There was nothing in the bond to the effect that Faust should not marry,

so far as we are told. The Old Man had a sense of humor. My own opinion is that after getting over the first annoyance he himself would have seen the joke. I can even picture him looking in now and again on Mr. and Mrs. Faust. The children would

When you see him coming just show him the hilt.

be hurried off to bed. There would be, for a while, an atmosphere of constraint. But the Old Man had a way with him. He would have told one or two stories at which Marguerite would have blushed, at which Faust would have grinned. I can see the old fellow occasionally joining the homely social board. The children—awed at first—would have sat silent,

with staring eyes. But, as I have said, we gather that he had a way with him. Why should he not have reformed? The good woman's unconsciously exerted influence! The sweet childish prattle! Might he not have come to be known as "Nunkie." Myself—I believe I have already mentioned it—I would not have married Marguerite. She is not my idea of a good girl. I never liked the way she deceived her mother. And that aunt of hers! Well, a nice girl would not have been friends with such a woman. She did not behave at all too well to Sybil either. It is clear to me that she led the boy on. And what was she doing with that box of jewels, anyhow? She was not a fool. She could not have gone every day to that fountain, chatted with those girl friends of hers, and learned nothing. She must have known that people don't go leaving twenty thousand pounds' worth of jewels about on doorsteps as part of a round game. Her own instinct, if she had been a good girl, would have told her to leave the things alone. I don't believe in these innocent people who do not know what they are doing half their time. Ask any London magistrate what he thinks of the lady who explains that she picked up the diamond brooch, "not meaning, of course, your Worship, to take it. I would not do such a thing. It just happened this way, your Worship, I was standing, as you might say, here, and, not seeing anyone about in the shop, I opened the case and took it out, thinking as perhaps it might belong to

someone—and then this gentleman here, as I had not noticed before, comes up quite suddenly and says, 'You come along with me,' he says. 'What for?' I says, 'when I don't even know you,' I says. 'For stealing,' he says. 'Well, that's a hard word to use to a lady,' I says; 'I don't know what you mean, I'm sure.'" If the lady happens to be Goethe's Marguerite, the magistrate, I suppose, would apologize to her, and tell her that she left the court without a stain upon her character. And if she had put them all on, not thinking what would a proper sort of a girl have done when the gentleman came up and assured her they were hers? She would have been thirty seconds taking them off and flinging them back into the box. "Thank you," she would have said, "I'll trouble you to leave this garden as quickly as you entered it and take them with you. I'm not that sort of a girl." What does Marguerite do? She clings to the jewels and accepts the young man's arm for a moonlight promenade. And when it does enter her innocent head that he and she have walked that shady garden long enough, what does she do when she has said good-bye and shut the door? She opens the ground-floor window and begins to sing. Maybe I am not poetical, but I do like justice. When other girls do these things, they get called names. I do not see why this particular girl should be held up as an ideal. She kills her mother; according to her own account it appears to have been an accident. It is not an original line of defence, and

we are not allowed to hear the evidence for the prosecution. She also kills her baby. You are not to blame her for that, because at the time she was feeling poorly. I don't see why this girl should have a special line of angels to take her up to heaven. There must have been decent, hard-working women in Nürnberg more entitled to the ticket. Why is it that all these years we have been content to accept Marguerite as a type of innocence and virtue. The explanation is, I suppose, that Goethe wrote at a time when it was the convention to regard all women as good. Anything in petticoats was virtuous. If she did wrong it was always somebody else's fault. *Cherchez la femme* was a later notion. In the days of Goethe it was always *Cherchez l'homme*. It was the man's fault. It was the devil's fault. It was anybody's fault you like, but not hers. The convention has not yet died out. I was reading the other day a most interesting book by a brilliant American authoress. Seeing I live far away from the lady's haunts, I venture to mention names. I am speaking of "Patience Sparhawk" by Gertrude Atherton. I take this book because it is typical of a large body of fiction. Miss Sparhawk lives a troubled life; it puzzles her. She asks herself what is wrong. Her own idea is that it is civilization. If it is not civilization, then it is the American man or nature—or Democracy. Miss Sparhawk marries the wrong man. Later on she gets engaged to the wrong man. In the end we are left to believe she is about to be

married to the right man. I should be better satisfied if I could hear Miss Sparhawk talking six months after that last marriage. But if a mistake has again been made I am confident that, in Miss Sparhawk's opinion, the fault will not be Miss Sparhawk's. The argument is always the same; Miss Sparhawk, being a lady, can do no wrong. If Miss Sparhawk cared to listen to me for five minutes, I feel I could put her right on this point. "It is quite true, my dear girl," I should say to her, "something is wrong, very wrong. But it is not the American man. Never you mind the American man: you leave him to worry out his own salvation. You are not the girl to put him right, even where he is wrong. And it is not civilization. Civilization has a deal to answer for, I admit; don't you load it up with this additional trouble. The thing that is wrong in this case of yours—if you will forgive my saying so—is you. You make a fool of yourself; you marry a man who is a mere animal because he appeals to your animal instincts. Then, like the lady who cried out, 'Alack, I've married a black,' you appeal to heaven against the injustice of being mated with a clown. You are not a nice clean girl, either in your ideas or in your behavior. I don't blame you for it; you did not make yourself. But when you set to work to attract all that is lowest in man, why be so astonished at your own success? There are plenty of shocking American men, I agree. One meets the class even outside America. But

nice American girls will tell you that there are also nice American men. There is an old proverb about birds of a feather. Next time you find yourself in the company of a shocking American man, you just ask yourself how he got there, and how it is he seems to be feeling at home. You learn self-control. Get it out of your head that you are the centre of the universe, and grasp the idea that a petticoat is not a halo, and you will find civilization not half as wrong as you thought it." I know what Miss Sparhawk's reply would be. "You say all this to me—to me, a lady. Great heavens! What has become of chivalry?" A Frenchman was once put on trial for murdering his father and mother. He confessed his guilt, but begged for mercy on the plea that he was an orphan. Chivalry was founded on the assumption that woman was worthy to be worshipped. The modern woman's notion is that when she does wrong she ought to be excused by chivalrous man because she is a lady. I like the naughty heroine; we all of us do. The early Victorian heroine, the angel in a white frock, was a bore. We knew exactly what she was going to do—the right thing. We did not ever have to ask ourselves, "What will she think is the right thing to do under the circumstances?" It was always the conventional right thing. You could have put it to a Sunday school and have got the answer every time. The heroine with passions, instincts, emotions, is to be welcomed. But I want her to grasp the fact that after all she is only one of

us. I should like her better if, instead of demanding, "What is wrong in civilization? What is the world coming to?" and so forth, she would occasionally say to herself. "Guess I've made a fool of myself this time. I do feel that 'shamed of myself——" She would not lose by it. We should love her all the more.

LITTLE LAND OF THE HAPPY DUTCH

LITTLE LAND OF THE HAPPY DUTCH

FOLKS suffering from jingoism, spread-eagleism, chauvinism—all such like 'isms, to whatever country they belong—would be well advised to take a tour in Holland. It is the idea of the moment that size spells happiness. The bigger the country, the better one is for living there. The happiest Frenchman cannot possibly be as happy as the most wretched Englishman, for the reason that England possesses many more thousands of square miles than France possesses. The Swiss peasant, compared with the Russian serf, must, when he looks at the map of Europe and Asia, feel himself to be a miserable creature. The reason that everybody in America is happy and good is to be explained by the fact that America has an area equal to that of the entire moon. The American citizen who has backed the wrong horse, missed his train, and lost his bag, remembers this and feels bucked up again. According to this argument, fishes should be the happiest of mortals, the sea consisting—at least, so says my atlas, I have not measured it myself—of a hundred and forty-four millions of square miles. But maybe the sea is also divided in ways we wot not of. Possibly the sardine who lives near the Brittany coast is sad and discon-

tented because the Norwegian sardine is the proud inhabitant of a larger sea. Perhaps that is why he has left the Brittany coast. Ashamed of being a

The Swiss peasant must, when he looks at the map of Europe and Asia, feel himself to be a miserable creature.

Brittany sardine he has emigrated to Norway, has become a naturalized Norwegian sardine, and is himself again. The happy Londoner on foggy

days can warm himself with the reflection that the sun never sets on the British Empire. He does not often see the sun, but that is a mere detail. He regards himself as the owner of the sun: the sun begins his little day in the British Empire, ends his little day in the British Empire; for all practical purposes the sun is part of the British Empire. Foolish people in other countries sit beneath it and feel warm, but that is only their ignorance; they do not know it is a British possession; if they did they would feel cold. My views on this subject are, I know, heretical. I cannot get it into my unpatriotic head that size is the only thing worth worrying about. In England, when I venture to express my out-of-date opinions, I am called a Little Englander. It fretted me at first. I was becoming a mere shadow. But by now I have got used to it. It would be the same, I feel, wherever I went. In New York I should be a Little American; in Constantinople a Little Turk. But I wanted to talk about Holland. A holiday in Holland serves as a corrective to exaggerated Imperialistic notions. There are no poor in Holland. They may be an unhappy people, knowing what a little country it is they live in; but, if so, they hide the fact. To all seeming, the Dutch peasant, smoking his great pipe, is as much a man as the Whitechapel hawker or the moocher of the Paris boulevard. I saw a beggar once in Holland—on the townlet of Enkhuisen. Crowds were hurrying up from the side streets to have a look at him; the idea

at first seemed to be that he was doing it for a bet. He turned out to be a Portuguese. They offered him work on the docks—until he could get some-

The Dutch peasant smoking his great pipe.

thing better to do—at wages equal in English money to about ten shillings a day. I inquired about him

on my way back through the town next day, and was told he had borrowed a couple of florins from the foreman and had left by the evening train. It is not the country for the loafer. In Holland work is easily found: this takes away the charm of looking for it. A farm laborer in Holland lives in a brick-built house of six rooms, which generally belongs to him, with an acre or so of ground; and eats meat only once a day. The rest of his time he fills up on eggs and chicken and cheese and beer. But you rarely hear him grumble. His wife and daughter may be seen on Sundays wearing gold and silver jewelry worth from fifty to a hundred pounds; and there is generally enough old delft and pewter in the house to start a local museum anywhere outside Holland. On high days and holidays, of which in Holland there are plenty, the average Dutch *vrouw* would be well worth running away with. The Dutch peasant girl has no need of an illustrated journal once a week to tell her what the fashion is: she has it in the portrait of her mother, or of her grandmother, hanging over the glittering chimney-piece. When the Dutchwoman builds a dress she builds it to last; it descends from mother to daughter, but it is made of sound material in the beginning. A lady friend of mine thought the Dutch costume would serve well for a fancy-dress ball, so set about buying one, but she abandoned the notion on learning what it would cost her. A Dutch girl in her Sunday clothes must be worth fifty pounds before you come

to ornaments. In certain provinces she wears a close-fitting helmet, made either of solid silver or of solid gold. The Dutch gallant, before making himself known, walks on tiptoe a little while behind the

She has it in the portrait of her mother, or her grandmother, hanging over the glittering chimney-piece.

Loved One and looks at himself in her head-dress just to make sure that his hat is on straight and his front curl just where it ought to be. In most other European countries national costume is dying out. The slop-shop is year by year extending its hideous trade.

But the country of Rubens and Rembrandt, of Teniers and Gerard Dow, remains still true to art. The picture postcard does not exaggerate. The men in those wondrous baggy knickerbockers, from the pockets of which you sometimes see a couple of chickens' heads protruding; in gaudy-colored shirts, in worsted hose, and mighty sabots, smoking their great pipes; the women in their petticoats of many hues, in gorgeously embroidered vests, in chemisettes of dazzling white, crowned with halos of many frills, glittering in gold and silver,—are not the creatures of an artist's fancy. You meet them in their thousands on holiday afternoons, walking gravely arm in arm, flirting with sober Dutch stolidity. On colder days the women wear bright-colored capes made of fine spun silk; from underneath the ample folds of which you sometimes hear a little cry—and sometimes a little hooded head peeps out, regards with preternatural thoughtfulness the toylike world without, then dives back into shelter. As for the children—women in miniature, the single difference in dress being the gay pinafore—you can say of them only that they look like Dutch dolls. But such plump, contented, cheerful little dolls! You remember the hollow-eyed, pale-faced dolls you see swarming in the great big and therefore should-be happy countries, and wish that more land surface were of less importance to our statesmen and our able editors, and the happiness and well-being of the mere human items worth

a little more of their thought. The Dutch peasant lives surrounded by canals and reaches his cottage across a drawbridge. I suppose it is in the blood of the Dutch child not to tumble into the canal, and the Dutch mother never appears to anticipate such possibility. One can imagine the average English mother trying to bring up a family in a house surrounded by canals. She would never have a moment's peace until the children were in bed. But then the mere sight of a canal to the English child suggests the delights of a sudden and unexpected bath. I put it to a Dutchman once: "Did the Dutch child by any chance ever fall into a canal?"—"Yes," he replied, "cases had been known."—"Don't you do anything for it?" I inquired.—"Oh, yes," he answered, "we haul them out again."—"But what I mean is," I explained, "don't you do anything to prevent their falling in—to save them from falling in again?"—"Yes," he answered, "we spank 'em." There is always a wind in Holland. It comes from over the sea. There is nothing to stay its progress. It leaps the low dykes and sweeps with a shriek across the sad soft dunes; and thinks it is going to have a good time and play havoc in the land. But the Dutchman laughs behind his great pipe as it comes to him shouting and roaring. "Welcome, my hearty; welcome," he chuckles, "come blustering and bragging; the bigger you are the better I like you." And when it is once in the land, behind the long straight dykes, behind the

waving line of sandy dunes, he seizes hold of it, and will not let it go till it has done its tale of work. The wind is the Dutchman's servant: before he lets it loose again it has turned ten thousand mills, has pumped the water and sawn the wood, has lighted the town and worked the loom, and forged the iron, and driven the great, slow, silent wherry, and played with the children in the garden. It is a sober wind when it gets back to sea, worn and weary, leaving the Dutchman laughing behind his everlasting pipe. There are canals in Holland down which you pass as through a field of wind-blown corn; a soft low rustling murmur ever in your ears. It is the ceaseless whirl of the great mill sails. Far out at sea the winds are as foolish savages, fighting, shrieking, tearing—purposeless. Here, in the street of mills, it is a civilized wind, crooning softly while it labors. What charms one in Holland is the neatness and the cleanliness of all about one. Maybe to the Dutchman there are drawbacks. In a Dutch household, life must be one long spring cleaning. No milk-pail is considered fit that cannot just as well be used for a looking-glass. The great brass pans hanging under the pent-house roof outside the cottage door flash like burnished gold. You could eat your dinner off the red-tiled floor, but that the deal table, scrubbed to the color of cream cheese, is more convenient. By each threshold stands a row of empty sabots, and woe betide the Dutchman who would dream of crossing it in anything but his stockinged

feet. There is a fashion in sabots. Every spring they are freshly painted. One district fancies an orange yellow, another a red, a third white, suggesting purity and innocence. Members of the smart set indulge in ornamentation: a frieze in pink, a star upon the toe. Walking in sabots is not as easy as it looks. Attempting to run in sabots I do not recommend to the beginner. "How do you run in sabots?" I asked a Dutchman once. I had been experimenting and had hurt myself. "We don't run," answered the Dutchman. And observation has proved to me that he was right. The Dutch boy, when he runs, puts them for preference on his hands, and uses them to hit other Dutch boys over the head as he passes. The roads in Holland, straight and level, and shaded all the way with trees, look from the railway carriage window as if they would be good for cycling, but this is delusion. I crossed in the boat from Harwich once with a well-known black-and-white artist, and an equally well-known and highly respected humorist. They had their bicycles with them, intending to tour Holland. I met them a fortnight later in Delft, or, rather, I met their remains. I was horrified at first; I thought it was drink. They could not stand still, they could not sit still, they trembled and shook in every limb, their teeth chattered when they tried to talk. The humorist hadn't a joke in him. The artist could not have drawn his own salary. He would have dropped it on the way to his pocket.

The Dutch roads are paved their entire length with cobbles—big, round cobbles, over which your bicycle leaps and springs and plunges. If you would see Holland outside the big towns, a smattering of Dutch is

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necessary. If you know German there is not much difficulty. Dutch—I speak as an amateur—appears to be very bad German mispronounced. Myself, I find that my German goes well in Holland, even better than in Germany. The Anglo-Saxon should not at-

tempt the Dutch G. It is hopeless to think of succeeding, and the attempt has been known to produce internal rupture. The Dutchman appears to keep his G in his stomach, and to haul it up when wanted. Myself, I find the ordinary G preceded by a hiccough and followed by a sob the nearest I can get to it. But they tell me it is not quite right yet. One needs to save up beforehand if one desires to spend any length of time in Holland. One talks of dear old England, but the dearest land in all the world is little Holland. The florin there is equal to the franc in France and to the shilling in England. They tell you that cigars are cheap in Holland. A cheap Dutch cigar will last you a day. It is not until you have forgotten the taste of it that you feel you ever want to smoke again. I knew a man who reckoned he had saved hundreds of pounds by smoking Dutch cigars for a month steadily. It was years before he smoked again. Watching building operations in Holland brings home to you forcibly what previously you have regarded as a meaningless formula, namely, that the country is built upon piles. A dozen feet below the level of the street one sees the laborers working in fishermen's boots up to their knees in water, driving the great wooden blocks into the mud. Many of the older houses slope forward at such an angle that you almost fear to pass beneath them. I should be as nervous as a kitten, living in one of the upper stories. But the Dutchman leans out of a window that is hanging

above the street six feet beyond the perpendicular, and smokes contentedly. They have a merry custom in Holland of keeping the railway time twenty minutes ahead of the town time—or is it twenty minutes behind? I can never remember when I'm there, and I am not sure now. The Dutchman himself never knows. "You've plenty of time," he says. "But the train goes at ten," you say, "the station is a mile away, and it is now half-past nine." "Yes, but that means ten twenty," he answers, "you have nearly an hour." Five minutes later he taps you on the shoulder. "My mistake; it's twenty to ten. I was thinking it was the other way about." Another argues with him that his first idea was right. They work it out by scientific methods. Meanwhile you have dived into a cab. The result is always the same; you are either forty minutes too soon, or you have missed the train by twenty minutes. A Dutch platform is always crowded with women explaining volubly to their husbands either that there was not any need to have hurried, or else that the thing would have been to have started half an hour before they did, the man in both cases being, of course, to blame. The men walk up and down, and swear. The idea has been suggested that the railway time and the town time should be made to conform. The argument against the idea is that if it were carried out then there would be nothing left to put the Dutchman out and worry him.

SPORT-STRICKEN MORTALS

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THAT we English attach too much importance to sport goes without saying—or, rather, it has been said so often as to have become a commonplace. One of these days some reforming English novelist will write a book showing the evil effects of over-indulgence in sport: the neglected business, the ruined home, the slow but sure sapping of the brain—what there may have been of it in the beginning; leading to semi-imbecility and yearly increasing obesity. A young couple I once heard of went for their honeymoon to Scotland. The poor girl did not know he was a golfer (he had wooed and won her during a period of idleness enforced by a sprained shoulder), or maybe she would have avoided Scotland. The idea they started with was that of a tour. The second day the man went out for a stroll by himself. At dinner time he observed, with a far-away look in his eyes, that it seemed a pretty spot they had struck, and suggested their staying there another day. The next morning after breakfast he borrowed a club from the hotel porter, and remarked he would take a walk while she finished doing her hair. He said it amused him, swinging a golf club while he walked. He returned

in time for lunch and seemed moody all the afternoon; he said the air suited him, and urged that they should linger yet another day. She was young and inexperienced and thought maybe it was liver. She had heard much about liver from her father. The next morning he borrowed more clubs and went

The next day he went out before breakfast.

out, this time before breakfast; returning to a late and not over-sociable dinner. That was the end of their honeymoon so far as she was concerned. He meant well, but the thing had gone too far. The vice had entered into his blood, and the smell of the links drove out all other considerations. We are most of us familiar, I take it, with the story of

the golfing parson who could not keep from swearing when balls went wrong. "Golf and the ministry don't seem to go together," his friend told him; "take my advice before it's too late and give it up, Tamus." A few months later Tamus met his friend again. "Ye were right, Jamie," cried the parson cheerfully, "they dinna run well in harness, golf and the meenistry; I hae followed your advice; I hae given it oop." "Then what are ye doing with the sack of clubs?" inquired Jimmy. "What am I doing with them?" repeated the puzzled Tamus, "why I'm going to play golf with them." A light broke upon him. "Great Heavens, man!" he continued, "ye didna' think 'twas the golf I'd gi'en up!" The Englishman does not understand play; he makes a lifelong labor of his sport, and to it sacrifices mind and body. The health resorts of Europe—to paraphrase a famous saying that nobody appears to have said—draw half their profits from the playing-fields of Eton and elsewhere. In Swiss and German *Kurhausen,* enormously fat men bear down upon you and explain to you that once they were the champion sprinter, the high-jump representative for their university—men who now hold on to the banisters and groan as they haul themselves upstairs. Consumptive men, between paroxysms of coughing, tell you of the goals they scored when they were half-backs or forwards of extraordinary ability. Ex-lightweight amateur pugilists, with the figure now of an Ameri-

can desk, butt you into a corner of the billiard-room and, surprised that they cannot get as near to you as they could wish, whisper to you the secret of

Fat men bear down on you and explain how they were once the champion sprinter.

avoiding the undercut by the swiftness of the backward leap. Broken-down tennis-players, one-legged skaters, dropsical gentlemen riders, are to be met with hobbling on crutches along every highway of the Engadine. Forest and valley echo to their wheezy breathing. They are pitiable objects. Never having learned to read anything but the

sporting papers, books are of no use to them. They never wasted much of their youth on thought, and apparently have lost the knack of it. They don't care for art, and nature suggests to them only the things they can no longer do. The snow-clad mountain reminds them that once they were daring tobogganists; the undulating common makes them sad because they can no longer handle a golf club; by the riverside they sit down and tell you of the salmon they caught before they caught rheumatic fever; birds only make them long for guns; music raises visions of the local cricket match of long ago, enlivened by the local band; a picturesque *cstaminet,* with little tables spread out under the vines, recalls bitter memories of ping-pong. One is sorry for them, but their conversation is not exhilarating. The man who has other interests in life beyond sport is apt to find their reminiscences monotonous; while to each other they do not care to talk; one gathers that they do not altogether believe one another. The foreigner is taking kindly to our sports; one hopes he will be forewarned by our example and not overdo the thing. At present, one is bound to admit, he shows no sign of taking sport too seriously. Football is gaining favor more and more throughout Europe. But yet the Frechman has not got it out of his head that the *coup* to practise is kicking the ball high into the air and catching it upon his head. He would rather catch the ball upon his head than score a goal. If he can ma-

nœuvre the ball away into a corner, kick it up into the air twice running, and each time catch it on his head, he does not seem to care what happens after that. Anybody can have the ball; he has had his game and is happy. They talk of introducing cricket into Belgium. I shall certainly try to be present at the opening game. I am afraid that until he learns from experience the Belgian fielder will stop cricket-balls with his head. That the head is the proper thing with which to play ball appears to be in his blood: my head is round, he argues, and hard, just like the ball itself; what part of a man more fit and proper to meet and stop a ball, except, perhaps—but no, the head comes more readily. Golf has not yet caught on, but tennis is firmly established from St. Petersburg to Bordeaux. The German, with the thoroughness characteristic of him, is working hard. University professors, stout majors, rising early in the morning, hire boys and practise back-handers and half-volleys. But to the Frenchman, as yet, it still remains a game. He plays it in a happy, merry fashion that is shocking to English eyes. Your partner's service rather astonishes you. An occasional yard or so beyond the line happens to anyone, but this man's object appears to be to break windows. You feel you really must remonstrate when the joyous laughter and tumultuous applause of the spectators explains the puzzle to you. He has not been trying to serve, he has been trying to hit a man in the next court

who is stooping down to tie up his shoe-lace. With his last ball he has succeeded: he has hit the man in the small of the back and has bowled him over. The unanimous opinion of the surrounding critics is that the ball could not possibly have been better placed. A Doherty has never won greater applause from the crowd. Even the man who has been hit appears pleased; it shows what a Frenchman can do when he does take up a game. But French honor demands revenge. He forgets his shoe, he forgets his game. He gathers together all the balls that he can find: his balls, your balls, anybody's balls that happen to be handy. And then commences the return match. At this point it is best to crouch down under shelter of the net. Most of the players round about adopt this plan; the more timid make for the club-house, and, finding themselves there, order coffee and light up cigarettes. After a while players appear to be satisfied. The other players then gather around to claim their balls. This makes a good game by itself. The object is to get as many balls as you can, your own and other people's,—for preference other people's,—and run off with them around the courts, followed by whooping claimants. In the course of half an hour or so, when everybody is dead beat, the game—the original game—is resumed. You demand the score: your partner promptly says it is forty-fifteen. Both your opponents rush up to the set and apparently there is going to be a duel. It is only a

friendly altercation; they very much doubt its being forty-fifteen. Fifteen-forty they could believe; they suggest it as a compromise; the discussion is concluded by calling it deuce. As it is rare for a game to proceed without some such incident oc-

To turn around and find he is talking to a man.

curring in the middle of it, the score generally is deuce. This avoids heart-burning: nobody wins a set and nobody loses. The one game generally suffices for the afternoon. To the earnest player it is also confusing to occasionally miss your partner —to turn around and find he is talking to a man. Nobody but yourself makes the slightest objection to his absence. The other side appear to regard it as

a good opportunity to score. Five minutes later he resumes the game. His friend comes with him, also the dog of his friend. The dog is welcomed with enthusiasm; all balls are returned to the dog. Until the dog is tired, you do not get a look in. But all this will, no doubt, soon be changed. There are some excellent French and Belgian players; from them their compatriots will gradually learn higher ideals. The Frenchman is young in the game. As the right conception of the game grows upon them, they will also learn to keep the balls lower. I suppose it is the Continental sky. It is so blue, so beautiful; it naturally attracts one. Anyhow, the fact remains that most tennis players on the Continent, whether English or foreign, have a tendency to aim the ball direct at heaven. At an English club in Switzerland there existed in my day a young Englishman who was really a wonderful player. To get the ball past him was almost an impossibility. It was his return that was weak. He only had one stroke; the ball went a hundred feet or so into the air and descended in his opponent's court. The other man would stand watching it, a little speck in the heavens, growing gradually bigger and bigger as it neared the earth. Newcomers would chatter to him, thinking he had detected a balloon or an eagle. He would wave them aside, explain to them that he would talk to them later, after the arrival of the ball. It would fall with a thud at his feet, rise another twenty yards or so, and again descend.

When it was at the proper height he would hit it back over the net and the next moment it would be mounting the sky again. At tournaments I have

Thinking he had detected a balloon or an eagle.

seen that young man, with tears in his eyes, pleading to be given an umpire. Every umpire had fled. They hid behind trees, borrowed silk hats and umbrellas, and pretended they were visitors—any device, however mean, to avoid the task of umpiring for that young man. Provided his opponent did not go to sleep or get cramp, one game might last all day. Anyone could return his balls; but, as I have said, to get a ball past him was almost an

impossibility. He invariably won. The other man, after an hour or so, would get mad and try to lose. It was his only chance of dinner. It is a pretty sight, generally speaking—a tennis-ground abroad. The women pay more attention to their costumes than do our lady players; the men are usually in spotless white. The ground is often charmingly situated, the club-house picturesque; there is always laughter and merriment. The play may not be so good to watch, but the picture is delightful. I accompanied a man a little while ago to his club on the outskirts of Brussels. The ground was bordered by a wood on one side and surrounded on the other three by *petites fermes*—allotments, as we should call them in England—worked by the peasants themselves. It was a glorious spring afternoon. The courts were crowded. The red earth and the green grass formed a background against which the women in their new Parisian toilets, under their bright parasols, stood out like wondrous bouquets of moving flowers. The whole atmosphere was a delightful mingling of idle gaiety, flirtation, and graceful sensuousness. A modern Watteau would have seized upon the scene with avidity. Just beyond—separated by the almost invisible wire fencing—a group of peasants were working in their field. An old woman and a young girl, with ropes about their shoulders, were drawing a harrow guided by a withered old scarecrow of a man. They paused for

a moment at the wire fencing and looked through. It was an odd contrast: the two worlds divided by that wire fencing—so slight, almost invisible. The girl swept the sweat from her face with her hand; the woman pushed back her gray locks underneath the handkerchief knotted about her head; the old man straightened himself with some difficulty. So they stood, for perhaps a minute, gazing with quiet, passionless faces through that slight fencing, that a push from their work-hardened hands might have levelled. Was there any thought, I wonder, passing through their brains? The young girl?—she was a handsome creature in spite of her disfiguring garments. The woman?—it was a wonderfully fine face, clear, calm eyes, deep set under a square broad brow. The withered old scarecrow?—ever sowing the seed in the spring of the fruit that others shall eat. The old man bent again over the guiding ropes; gave the word. The team moved forward up the hill. It is Anatole France, I think, who says Society is based upon the patience of the poor.

THE YELLOW MASK

THE YELLOW MASK

IT is a delightful stroll on a sunny summer morning from the Hague to the Huis ten Bosch, the little "House in the Wood," built for Princess Amalia, widow of Stadholdter Frederick Henry, under whom Holland finally escaped from the bondage of her foes and entered into the promised land of Liberty. Leaving the quiet streets, the tree-bordered canals, with their creeping barges, you pass through a pleasant park, where the soft-eyed deer press around you, hurt and indignant if you have brought nothing in your pocket, not even a piece of sugar to offer them. It is not that they are grasping, it is the want of attention that wounds them. "I thought he was a gentleman," they seem to be saying to one another, if you glance back; "he looked like a gentleman." Their mild eyes haunt you: on the next occasion you do not forget. The park merges into the forest; you go by winding ways till you reach the trim Dutch garden, moat-encircled, in the centre of which stands the prim, old-fashioned villa which to the simple Dutchman appears a palace. The concierge, an old soldier, bows low to you and introduces you to his wife, a stately white-haired dame who talks most languages a little—so far as relates to all

things within and appertaining to this tiny palace of the wood. To things without, beyond the wood, her powers of conversation do not extend: apparently such matters do not interest her. She conducts you to the Chinese room; the sun streams through the windows, illuminating the wondrous golden dragons standing out in bold relief from the burnished lacquer-work, decorating still further with light and shade the delicate silk embroideries thin taper hands have woven with infinite pains. The walls are hung with rice paper, depicting the conventional scenes of the conventional Chinese life. You find your thoughts wandering. These grotesque figures, these caricatures of humanity! A comical creature surely this Chinaman, the pantaloon of Europe. How useful he has been to us: for our farces, our comic operas! This yellow baby, in his ample pinafore, who lived thousands of years ago, who has now passed into this strange second childhood. But is he dying—or does the life of a nation wake again, as after sleep? Is he this droll harmless thing he here depicts himself? And if not? Suppose fresh sap is stirring through his three hundred millions? We thought he was so very dead, we thought the time had come to cut him up and divide him, the only danger being lest we should quarrel over his carcass among ourselves. Suppose it turns out as the fable of the woodcutter and the bear? The woodcutter found the bear lying in the forest. At first he was much frightened, but the bear lay

remarkably still. So the woodman crept nearer, ventured to kick the bear—very gently, ready to run if need be. Surely the bear was dead! And parts of a bear are good to eat, and bearskin to poor woodfolk on cold winter nights is grateful. So the woodman drew his knife and commenced the necessary preliminaries. But the bear was not dead. If the Chinaman be not dead? If the cutting-up process has only served to waken him? In a little time from now we shall know. From the Chinese room, the white-haired dame leads us to the Japanese room. Had gentle-looking Princess Amalia some vague foreshadowing of the future in her mind when she planned these two rooms leading into one another? The Japanese decorations are more grotesque, the designs less cheerfully comical than those of cousin Chinaman. These monstrous, misshapen wrestlers, these patient-looking gods with their inscrutable eyes! Was it always there, or is it only by the light of present events that one reads into the fantastic fancies of the artist, working long ago in the doorway of his paper house, a meaning that has hitherto escaped us? But the chief attraction of the Huis ten Bosch is the gorgeous Orange Saloon, lighted by a cupola, fifty feet above the floor, the walls one blaze of pictures, chiefly of the gorgeous Rubens school: "The Defeat of the Vices," "Time Vanquishing Slander," —mostly allegorical, in praise of all the virtues, in praise of enlightenment and progress. Aptly

enough, in a room so decorated, here was held the famous Peace Congress that closed the last century. One can hardly avoid smiling as one thinks of the solemn conclave of grandees assembled to proclaim the popularity of peace. It was in the autumn of the same year that Europe decided upon the partition of China, that soldiers were instructed by Christian monarchs to massacre men, women, and children, the idea being to impress upon the Heathen Chinee the superior civilization of the white man. The Boer war followed almost immediately. Since then the white man has been pretty busy all over the world with his "expeditions" and his "*missions.*" The world undoubtedly is growing more refined. We do not care for ugly words. Even the burglar refers airily to the "little job" he has on hand. You would think he had found work in the country. I should not be surprised to learn that he says a prayer before starting, telegraphs home to his anxious wife the next morning that his task has been crowned with blessing. Until the far-off date of Universal Brotherhood war will continue, matters considered unimportant by both parties will—with a mighty flourish of trumpets—be referred to arbitration. I was talking of a famous financier once, a while ago, with a man who had been his secretary. Among other anecdotes he told me of a certain agreement about which dispute had arisen. The financier took the paper into his own hands and made a few swift calculations.

"Let it go," he concluded, "it is only a thousand pounds at the outside. May as well be honest!" About fishing-rights in out-of-the-way seas, and boundaries through unproductive mountain ranges, we shall arbitrate and feel virtuous. For gold-

Sends a telegram to his wife of the entire success of the job.

mines and good pasture land, mixed up with a little honor to give respectability to the business, we shall fight it out, as previously. War being thus inevitable, the humane man will rejoice that by one of those brilliant discoveries, so simple when they are explained, war in the future is going to be rendered equally satisfactory to victor and to vanquished.

In by-elections, as a witty writer has pointed out, there are no defeats; only victories and moral victories. The idea seems to have caught on. War in the future is evidently going to be conducted on the same understanding. Once upon a time, from a far-off land, a certain general telegraphed home congratulating his government that the enemy had shown no inclination whatever to prevent his running away. The whole country rejoiced. "Why they never even tried to stop him," citizens, meeting other citizens in the street, told each other. "Ah, they've had enough of him, I bet they are only too glad to get rid of him. Why, they say he ran for miles without seeing a trace of the foe." The enemy's general, on the other hand, also wrote home congratulating his government. In this way the same battle can be mafficked over by both parties. Contentment is the great secret of happiness. Everything happens for the best, if only you look at it the right way. That is going to be the argument. The general of the future will telegraph to headquarters that he is pleased to be able to inform his Majesty that the enemy, having broken down all opposition, has succeeded in crossing the frontier, and is now well on his way to his Majesty's capital. "I am luring him on," he will add, "as fast as I can. At our present rate of progress I am in hopes of bringing him home by the 10th." Lest foolish civilian sort of people should wonder whereabouts lies the cause of rejoicing, the military

man will condescend to explain. The enemy is being enticed farther and farther from his base. The defeated general—who is not really defeated,

Is now well on his way to his Majesty's capital.

who is only artful, and who appears to be running away—is not really running away. On the contrary he is running home, bringing—as he explains—the enemy with him. If I remember rightly—it is long since I played it—there is a parlor game entitled, "Puss in the Corner." You beckon another player to you with your finger. "Puss, puss," you cry. Thereupon he has to leave his chair—his "base," as the military man would term it—and try to get to you without anything happening to him. War in

the future is going to be "Puss in the Corner" on a bigger scale. You lure your enemy away from his base. If all goes well—if he does not see the trap that is being laid for him—why, then, almost before he knows it, he finds himself in your capital. That finishes the game. You find out what it is he really wants: provided it is something within reason, and you happen to have it handy, you give it to him. He goes home crowing; and you, on your side, laugh when you think how cleverly you succeeded in luring him away from his base. There is a bright side to all things. The gentleman charged with the defence of a fortress will meet the other gentleman who has captured it and shake hands with him amid the ruins. "So, here you are at last," he will exclaim. "Why didn't you come before? We have been waiting for you." And he will send off despatches felicitating his chief on having got that fortress off their hands, together with all the worry and expense it has been to them. When prisoners are taken you will console yourself with the reflection that the cost of feeding them for the future will have to be borne by the enemy. Captured cannon you will watch being trailed away with a sigh of relief. "Confounded heavy things!" you will say to yourself. "Thank goodness, I've got rid of them. Let him have the fun of dragging them about these ghastly roads. See how he likes the job!" War is a ridiculous method of settling disputes. Anything that can tend to make its ridic-

ulous aspect more apparent is to be welcomed. The new school of military despatch-writers may succeed in turning even the laughter of the mob against

"Well, you are here at last," you say.

it. The present trouble in the East would never have occurred but for the white man's enthusiasm for bearing other people's burdens. What we call the yellow danger is the fear that the yellow man

may before long request us, so far as he is concerned, to put his particular burden down. It may occur to him that, seeing it is his property, he would just as soon carry it himself. A London policeman told me a story the other day that struck him as an example of Cockney humor under trying circumstances. But it may also serve as a fable. From a lonely street in the neighborhood of Covent Garden, early one morning, the constable heard cries of "Stop thief!" shouted in a childish treble. He arrived on the scene just in time to collar a young hooligan who, having snatched a basket of fruit from a small lad,—a greengrocer's errand-boy, as it turned out,—was making tracks with it. The greengrocer's boy, between panting and tears, delivered his accusation. The hooligan regarded him with an expression of amazed indignation. "What d'yer mean,—stealin' it?" exclaimed Mr. Hooligan, "why, I was carryin' it fer yer!" The white man has got into the way of "carrying" other people's burdens; and now it looks as if the yellow man were going to object to our carrying his any further. Maybe he is going to get nasty and insist on carrying it himself. We call this "the yellow danger." A friend of mine—he is a man who in the street walks into lamp-posts and apologizes—sees rising from the East the dawn of a new day in the world's history. The yellow danger is to him a golden hope. He sees a race long stagnant, stretching its giant limbs with the first vague movements of re-

turning life. He is a poor sort of patriot; he calls himself, I suppose, a white man, yet he shamelessly confesses he would rather see Asia's millions rise from the ruins of their ancient civilization to take part in the future of humanity than that half the

"Stealin'? Now, I was only carryin' it."

population of the globe should remain bound in savagery for the pleasure and the profit of his own particular species. He even goes so far as to think that the white man may have something to learn. The world has belonged to him now for some thousands of years. Has he done all with it that could

have been done? Are his ideals the last word? Not what the yellow man has absorbed from Europe it is that interests my friend. He is watching the birth of a new Force; an influence as yet unknown. He clings to the fond belief that new ideas, new formulæ to replace the old worn shibboleths, may, during these thousands of years, have been developing in those keen brains that behind the impressive yellow mask have been working so long in silence and in mystery.

DAWN O' DAY IN THE BIG CITIES

DAWN O' DAY IN THE BIG CITIES

IT was in Paris, many years ago, that I fell by chance into this habit of early rising. My night, by reasons that I need not enter into, had been a troubled one. Tired of the hot bed that gave no sleep, I rose and dressed myself, crept down the creaking stairs, experiencing the sensations of a burglar new to his profession, unbolted the great door of the hotel, and passed out into an unknown, silent city, bathed in a mysterious soft light. Since then this strange sweet city of the dawn has never ceased to call to me. It may be in London, in Paris again, in Brussels, Berlin, Vienna, that I have gone to sleep, but if perchance I wake before the returning tide of human life has dimmed its glories with the mists and vapors of the noisy day, I know that beyond my window-blind the fairy city, as I saw it first so many years ago,—this city that knows no tears, no sorrow, through which creeps no evil thing; this city of quiet vistas fading into hope; this city of far-off voices whispering peace; this city of the dawn that still is young,—invites me to talk with it a while before the waking hours drive it before them, and with a sigh it passes whither it came. It is the great city's one hour of purity, of dignity. The very rag-picker,

groping with her filthy hand, instead of an object of contempt, moves from door to door an accusing figure, her thin soiled garments, her bent body, her scarred face, hideous with the wounds of poverty, an eloquent indictment of smug injustice sleeping behind its deaf shutters. Yet even into her dim brain has sunk the peace that for this brief hour fills the city. This, too, shall have its end, my sister! Men and women were not born to live on the husks that fill the pails outside the rich man's door. Courage a little while longer, you and yours. Your rheumy eyes once were bright, your thin locks once soft and wavy, your poor bent back once straight. Maybe, as they tell you in their gilded churches, this bulging sack shall be lifted from your weary shoulders, your misshapen limbs be straight again. Be sure, at all events, you pass not unheeded through these empty streets. Not all the eyes of the universe are sleeping. Then, the little seamstress hurrying to her early work! A little later she will be one of a foolish crowd, joining in the foolish laughter, the coarse jests of the workroom, but as yet the hot day has not claimed her. The workroom is far beyond, the home of mean cares and sordid struggles far behind. To her, also, in this moment belong the sweet thoughts of womanhood. She puts down her bag, rests herself upon a seat. If all the day were dawn, this city of the morning always with us! A neighboring clock chimes forth the hour. She starts up from her dream and hurries on to the noisy

workroom with its coarse jests, its vile gossip. A pair of lovers cross the park, holding each other's hands. They will return this same way later in the day, but there will be another expression in their eyes, another meaning in the pressure of their

Holding each other's hands.

hands. Now the purity of the morning is with them. Some fat middle-aged clerk comes puffing into view; his ridiculous little figure very podgy. He stops to take off his hat, and mop his bald head with his handkerchief; even to him the morning lends romance. His fleshy face changes almost as one looks at him. One sees again the lad, with his vague hopes, his absurd ambitions.

There is a statue of Aphrodite in one of the smaller Paris parks. Twice in the same week, without particularly meaning it, I found myself early in the morning standing in front of this statue gazing listlessly, as one does when in dreamy mood;

He stops to take off his hat and mop his bald head with his handkerchief.

and on both occasions, turning to go, I encountered the same man, also gazing at it with apparently listless eyes. He was an uninteresting-looking man —possibly he thought the same of me. From his dress he might have been a well-to-do tradesman, a minor government official, doctor, or lawyer. Quite

ten years later I paid my third visit to the same statue at about the same hour. This time he was there before me. I was hidden from him by some bushes. He glanced around but did not see me; and then he did a curious thing. Placing his hands on the top of the pedestal, which may have been some seven feet in height, he drew himself up till his lips were on a level and kissed very gently, almost reverentially, the foot of the statue, begrimed though it was with the city's dirt. Had he been some long-haired student of the Latin Quarter one would not have been so astonished. But he was such a very commonplace, quite respectable-looking man. Afterward he drew a pipe from his pocket, carefully filled and lighted it, took his umbrella from the seat where it had been lying, and walked away. Had it been their meeting-place long ago? Had he been wont to tell her, gazing at her with lover's eyes, how like she was to the statue? The French sculptor has not to consider Mrs. Grundy. Maybe the lady, raising her eyes, had been confused, perhaps for a moment angry,—some little milliner or governess, one supposes. In France the *jeune fille* of good family does not meet her lover unattended.

What had happened? Or was it but the vagrant fancy of a middle-aged *bourgeois* seeking in imagination the romance that reality so rarely gives us, weaving his love-dream around this changeless statue? In one of Ibsen's bitter comedies the lovers agree to part while they are still young, never to see

each other in the flesh again. Into the future each will bear away the image of the other, godlike, radiant with the glory of youth and love; each will cherish the memory of a loved one who shall be beautiful always. That their parting may not appear such wild nonsense as at first it strikes us, Ibsen shows us the lovers who have married in the usual orthodox fashion. She was all a mistress should be. They speak of her as they first knew her fifteen years ago, when every man was at her feet, he, then a young student, burning with fine ideals, with enthusiasm for all the humanities. They enter. What did you expect? Fifteen years have passed away; fifteen years of struggle with the grim realities. He is fat, growing bald. Eleven children have to be provided for. High ideals will not even pay the bootmaker. To exist, you have to fight for mean ends with mean weapons. And the sweet girl heroine, the worried mother of eleven brats! One rings the curtain amid satanic laughter. That is why, for one reason among so many, I love this mystic morning light. It has strange power of revealing the beauty that is hidden from us by the coarse beams of the full day. These worn men and women, grown so foolish-looking, so unromantic—these artisans and pretty clerks plodding to their monotonous day's work; these dull-eyed women of the people on their way to market to haggle over *sous,* to argue and contend over paltry handfuls of food. In this magic morning light the disguising body be-

comes transparent. They have grown beautiful, not ugly, with the years of toil and hardship; these lives lived so patiently are consecrated to the service of the world. Joy, hope, pleasure—they have done with all such; life for them is over, yet they labor ceaselessly, uncomplainingly. It is for the children. One morning near Brussels I encountered a cart of fagots drawn by a hound so lean that stroking him might have scratched your hand. I was shocked—angry for the moment, till I noticed his fellow beast of burden pushing the cart from behind. Such a scarecrow of an old woman! There was little to choose between them. I walked with them a little way. She lived near Waterloo. All day long she gathered wood in the great forest, and, starting at three o'clock each morning, the two lean creatures between them dragged the cart nine miles to Brussels, returning when she had sold their load. With luck she might reckon on a couple of francs. I asked her if she could not find something else to do. Yes, it was possible; but for the little one, her grandchild. You fair, dainty ladies, who would never know it was morning if somebody did not come in to pull up the blind and tell you so, you do well not to venture out in this magic morning light; you would look so plain, almost ugly, by the side of these great-hearted hags.

It is curious the attraction that a church has always possessed for the marketing classes. Christ drove them from the Temple, but still in every Con-

tinental city they cluster around its walls. It makes a charming picture on a summer morning, the great cathedral with its massive shadow forming the background; splashed about its feet, like a parterre of gay flowers around the trunk of some old tree, the women, young girls in their many-colored costumes, sitting before their piled-up baskets of green vegetables, of brilliant fruit. In Brussels the chief market is held on the Grand Place; the great gilded houses have looked down upon much the same scene every morning these four hundred years. In summer time it commences about half-past four; by five o'clock it is a roaring hive, the great city round about still sleeping. Here comes the thrifty housewife of the poor, to whom the difference of the tenth of a penny in the price of a cabbage is all-important, the much-harassed keeper of the petty *pension*. There are houses in Brussels where they will feed you, light you, sleep you, wait on you, for two francs a day. Withered old ladies, ancient governesses, who will teach you for forty centimes an hour, gather around these ricketty tables, wolf-up the thin soup, grumble at the watery coffee, help themselves with unladylike greediness to the potato pie. It needs careful housekeeping to keep these poor creatures on two francs a day and make a profit for yourself. So "Madame," the much-grumbled-at, who has gone to bed about twelve, rises a little before five, makes her way down with her basket. Thus a few *sous* may be saved upon the day's economies. Sometimes

it is a mere child who is the little housekeeper; one thinks that perhaps this early training in the art of haggling may not be good for her. Already there is a hard expression in the childish eyes, mean lines about the little mouth. The finer qualities of humanity are expensive luxuries not to be afforded by the poor. They overwork their patient dogs and underfeed them. During the two hours' market the poor beasts, still fastened to their little "chariots," rest in the open space about the neighboring Bourse; they snatch at what you throw them; they do not even thank you with a wag of the tail. Gratitude! Politeness! What mean you? We have not heard of such. We only work. Some of them, amid all the din, lie sleeping between their shafts. Some are licking one another's sores; maybe one another's troubles they can understand. One would they were better treated: alas, their owners likewise are overworked and underfed, housed in kennels no better! But if the majority in every society were not overworked and underfed and meanly housed, why then the minority could not be underworked and overfed and housed luxuriously. But this is talk that no respectable reader can be expected to listen to. They are babels of bargaining, these markets. The purchaser selects a cauliflower. Fortunately the cauliflower has no feelings, or probably it would burst into tears at the expression with which it is regarded. It is impossible that any lady should desire such a cauliflower; still, out of mere curiosity, she

would know the price; that is, if the owner of the cauliflower is not too much ashamed of it to name a price. The owner of the cauliflower suggests six *sous*. The thing is too ridiculous for argument, the other lady breaks into a laugh. The owner of the

She gives a sketch of the cauliflower's career, from its youth upward.

cauliflower is stung; she points the beauties of that cauliflower. Apparently it is the cauliflower out of all her stock that she loves best; a better cauliflower never lived; if there were more cauliflowers things might be different. She gives a sketch of

the cauliflower's career, from its youth upward. Hard enough it will be for her when the hour for parting from it comes. If the other lady has not sufficient knowledge of cauliflowers to appreciate it, will she kindly not paw it about, but put it down and go away and never let the owner of the cauliflower see her again. The other lady, more as a friend than a purchaser, points out the cauliflower's defects. She wishes well to the owner of the cauliflower and would like to teach her something about her business. A lady who thinks such a cauliflower worth six *sous* can never hope to succeed as a cauliflower-vendor. Has she really taken the trouble to examine the cauliflower for herself, or has love made her blind to its shortcomings? The owner of the cauliflower is too indignant to reply. She snatches it away, appears to be comforting it, replaces it in the basket. The other lady is grieved at human obstinacy and stupidity in general. If the owner of the cauliflower had had any sense she would have asked four *sous*. Eventually business is done at five. It is the custom everywhere abroad. Asking the price of a thing is simply opening the conversation. A lady told me that the first day she began housekeeping in Florence she handed over to a poulterer for a chicken the price he had demanded with protestations that he was losing by the transaction, but wanted, for family reasons apparently, to get rid of the chicken. He stood for a half a minute staring at her, and then, being an honest sort of man,

threw in a pigeon. Foreign housekeepers starting business in London appear hurt when our tradesmen decline to accept half-a-crown for articles marked three-and-six. Then why mark it only three-and-sixpence? is their argument.

GOODNESS THAT GRATES ON US

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THE advantage that the foreigner possesses over the Englishman is that he is born good. He does not have to try to be good, as we do. He does not have to start the new year with the resolution to be good, and succeed, bar accidents, in being so till the middle of January. He just is good all the year round. When a foreigner is told to mount or descend from a tram on the near side, it does not occur to him that it would be humanly possible to secure egress from or ingress to that tram on the off side. In Brussels once I witnessed a daring attempt by a lawless foreigner to enter a tram from the wrong side. The gate was open; he was standing close behind it. A line of traffic was in his way; to have got round to the right side of that tram would have meant missing it. He entered when the conductor was not looking and took his seat. The astonishment of the conductor on finding him there was immense. How did he get there? The conductor had been watching the proper entrance, and the man had not passed him. Later the true explanation suggested itself to the conductor, but for a while he hesitated to accuse a fellow human being of such crime. He appealed to the passenger himself. Was his presence there to be

accounted for by miracle or by sin? The passenger confessed. It was more in sorrow than in anger that the conductor requested him at once to leave. This tram was going to be kept respectable. The passenger proving refractory, a halt was called and the *gendarmerie* appealed to. After the manner of policemen, they sprang, as it were, from the ground, and formed up behind an imposing officer whom I took to be their sergeant. At first the sergeant could hardly believe the conductor's statement. Even then, had the passenger asserted that he had entered by the proper entrance, his word would have been taken. Much easier to the foreign official mind would it have been to believe that the conductor had been struck by the Lord with temporary blindness than that man born of woman would have deliberately done anything expressly forbidden by a printed notice. Myself in his case, I should have lied and got the trouble over. But he was a proud man or had not much sense—one of the two—and so held fast to the truth. It was pointed out to him that he must descend immediately and wait for the next tram. Other *gendarmes* were arriving from every quarter; resistance under the circumstances seemed hopeless. He said he would get down. He made to descend this time by the proper gate, but that was not justice. He had mounted on the wrong side, he must alight on the wrong side. Accordingly, he was put out amid the traffic, after which the conductor preached a sermon from the centre of the

tram on the danger of ascents and descents conducted from the wrong quarter. There is a law throughout Germany—an excellent law it is; I would we had it in England—that nobody may scatter paper about the street. An English military friend told me that one day in Dresden, being unacquainted with this rule, he tore a long letter he had been reading into some fifty fragments and threw them behind him. A policeman stopped him and quite politely explained to him the law upon the subject. My military friend agreed that it was a very good law, thanked the man for his information, and said that for the future he would bear it in mind. That, as the policeman pointed out, would make things right enough for the future, but meanwhile it was necessary to deal with the past—with the fifty or so pieces of paper, lying scattered about the road and pavement. My military friend, with a pleasant laugh, confessed he did not see what was to be done. The policeman, more imaginative, saw a way out. It was that my military friend should set to work and pick up those fifty scraps of paper. He is an English general on the retired list and of imposing appearance; his manner on occasions is haughty. He did not see himself on his hands and knees in the chief street of Dresden, in the middle of the afternoon, picking up paper. The German policeman himself admitted that the situation was awkward. If the English general could not accept it there happened to be an alternative. It was that the English

general should accompany the policeman through the streets followed by the usual crowd to the nearest prison, some three miles off. It being now four o'clock in the afternoon, they would probably find the judge departed. But the most comfortable

That, as the policeman pointed out, would make things right for the future.

thing possible in prison cells should be allotted to him and the policeman had little doubt that the general, having paid his fine of forty marks, would find himself a free man again in time for lunch the following day. The general suggested hiring a boy to

pick up the paper. The policeman referred to the wording of the law and found that this would not be permitted. "I thought the matter out," my friend told me, "imagining all the possible alternatives including that of knocking the fellow down and making a bolt; and came to the conclusion that his first suggestion would, on the whole, result in the least discomfort. But I had no idea that picking up small scraps of thin paper off greasy stones was the business that I found it! It took me nearly ten minutes and afforded amusement, I calculate, to over a thousand people. But it is a good law, mind you; all I wish is that I had known it beforehand." On one occasion I accompanied an American lady to a German opera-house. The taking off of hats in the German *Schauspielhaus* is obligatory, and again I would it were so in England. But the American lady is accustomed to disregard rules made by mere man. She explained to the doorkeeper that she was going to wear her hat. He, on his side, explained to her that she was not; they were both a bit short with one another. I took the opportunity to turn aside and buy a programme; the fewer people there are mixed up in an argument, I always think, the better. My companion exclaimed quite frankly to the doorkeeper that it did not matter what he said, she was not going to take any notice of him. He did not look a talkative man at any time, and maybe this announcement further discouraged him. In any case he made no attempt to answer. All he

did was to stand in the centre of the doorway with a far-away look in his eyes. The doorway was some four feet wide; he was about three feet six across

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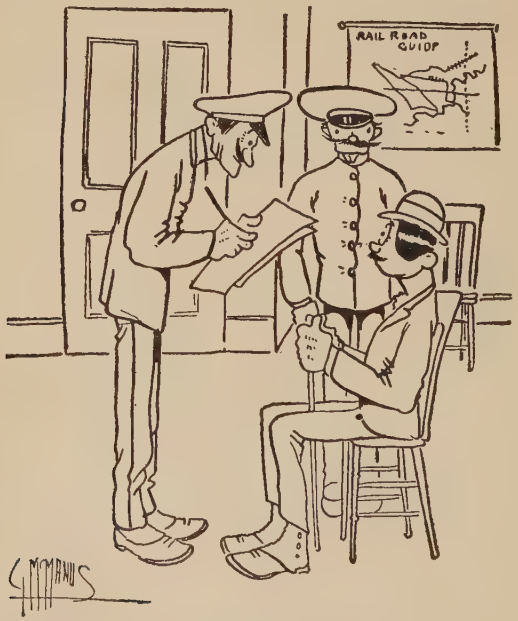
and weighed about twenty stone. As I explained, I was busy buying a programme, and when I returned my friend had her hat in her hand and was digging pins into it: I think she was trying to make believe it was the heart of the doorkeeper. She did not

want to listen to the opera, she wanted to talk about that doorkeeper, but they would not even let her do that. She has spent three winters in Germany since then. Now when she feels like passing through a door that is standing wide open just in front of her, and which leads to just the place she wants to get to, and an official shakes his head at her and explains that she must not, but must go up two flights of stairs and along a corridor and down another flight of stairs, and so get to her place that way, she apologizes for her error and trots off looking ashamed of herself. Continental governments have trained their citizens to perfection. Obedience is the Continent's first law. The story that is told of a Spanish king who was nearly drowned because the particular official whose duty it was to dive in after Spanish kings when they tumbled out of boats happened to be dead and his successor had not yet been appointed, I can quite believe. On the Continental railways, if you ride second-class with a first-class ticket you render yourself liable to imprisonment. What the penalty is for riding first-class with a second-class ticket I cannot say—probably death, though a friend of mine came very near on one occasion to finding out. All would have gone well with him if he had not been so darned honest. He was one of those men who pride themselves upon being honest. I believe he takes a positive pleasure in being honest. He had purchased a second-class ticket for a station up a mountain, but, meeting a lady acquaintance

by chance on the platform, had gone with her into a first-class compartment. On arriving at the journey's end he explained to the collector what he had done, and, with his purse in his hand, demanded to know the difference. They took him into a room and locked the door. They wrote out his confession



The policeman cross-examined him for about a quarter of an hour.

and read it over to him, and made him sign it and then sent for a policeman. The policeman cross-examined him for about a quarter of an hour. They

did not believe the story about the lady. Where was the lady? He did not know. They searched the neighborhood for her, but could not find her. He suggested—what turned out to be the truth—that, tired of loitering about the station, she had gone up the mountain. An Anarchist outrage had occurred in a neighboring town some months before. The policeman suggested searching him for bombs. Fortunately a Cook's agent, returning with a party of tourists, arrived upon the scene and took it upon himself to explain in delicate language that my friend was a bit of an ass and could not tell first class from second class. It was the red cushions that had deceived my friend: he thought it was first class, as a matter of fact it was second class. Everybody breathed again. The confession was torn up amid universal joy; and then the fool of a ticket-collector wanted to know what about the lady—who must have travelled in a second-class compartment with a first-class ticket. It looked as if a bad time were in store for her on her return to the station. But the admirable representative of Cook was again equal to the occasion. He explained that my friend was also a bit of a liar. When he said he had travelled with this lady he was merely boasting. He would have liked to have travelled with her, that was all he meant, only his German was shaky. Joy once more entered upon the scene. My friend's character appeared to be re-established. He was not the abandoned wretch for whom they had taken

him—only, apparently, a wandering idiot. Such an one the German official could respect. At the expense of such an one the German official even consented to drink beer. Not only the foreign man, woman, and child, but the foreign dog is born good. In England, if you happen to be the possessor of a dog, much of your time is taken up dragging him out of fights, quarrelling with the possessor of the other dog as to which began it; explaining to irate elderly ladies that he did not kill the cat, that the cat must have died of heart-disease while running across the road; assuring disbelieving gamekeepers that he is not your dog, that you have not the faintest notion whose dog he is. With the foreign dog, life is a peaceful proceeding. When the foreign dog sees a row, tears spring to his eyes, he hastens on and tries to find a policeman. When the foreign dog sees a cat in a hurry, he stands aside to allow her to pass. They dress the foreign dog—some of them, in a little coat, with a pocket for his handkerchief, and put shoes on his feet. They have not given him a hat—not yet. When they do he will contrive by some means or another to raise it politely when he meets a cat he thinks he knows. One morning in a Continental city I came across a disturbance—it might be more correct to say the disturbance came across me: it swept down upon me, enveloped me before I knew that I was in it. A fox-terrier it was, belonging to a very young lady—it was when the disturbance was to a certain extent

over that we discovered he belonged to this young lady. She arrived toward the end of the disturbance, very much out of breath; she had been running for a mile, poor girl, and shouting most of the way. When she looked around and saw all the things that had happened, and had had other things that she had missed explained to her, she burst into tears. The English owner of a fox-terrier would have given one look around and then have jumped upon the nearest tram—going anywhere. But, as I have said, the foreigner is born good. I left her giving her name and address to seven different people. But it was about the dog I wished to speak more paricularly. He had commenced innocently enough, trying to catch a sparrow. Nothing delights a sparrow more than being chased by a dog. A dozen times he thought he had the sparrow. Then another dog had got in his way. I don't know what they call this breed of dog, but abroad it is popular; it has no tail and looks like a pig—when things are going well with it. This particular specimen, when I saw him, looked more like part of a doormat. The fox-terrier had seized it by the scruff of the neck and had rolled it over into the gutter just in front of a motorcycle. Its owner, a large lady, had darted out to save it, and had collided with the motorcyclist. The large lady had been thrown some half a dozen yards against an Italian boy carrying a tray-load of plaster images. I have seen a good deal of trouble in my life, but never one yet that did not have an

Italian image-vendor somehow or other mixed up in it. Where these boys hide in times of peace is a mystery. The chance of being upset brings them out as sunshine brings out flies. The motorcycle had dashed into a little milk-cart and had spread it

The large lady had been thrown some half a dozen yards against an Italian boy.

out neatly in the middle of the tram lines. The tram traffic looked like being stopped for a quarter

of an hour; but the idea of every approaching tram-driver appeared to be that by ringing his bell with sufficient vigor this seeming obstruction would fade away and disappear. In an English town all this would not have attracted much attention. Somebody would have explained that a dog was the original cause, and the whole series of events would have appeared ordinary and natural. To these foreigners the fear entered that the Almighty, for some reason, was angry with them. A policeman ran to catch the dog. The delighted dog rushed backward, barking furiously, and tried to throw up paving stones with his hind legs. That frightened a nursemaid who was wheeling a perambulator; and then it was that I entered into the proceedings. Seated on the edge of the pavement, with a perambulator on one side of me and a howling baby on the other, I told that dog what I thought of him. Forgetful that I was in a foreign land—that he might not understand me—I told it him in English. I told it him at length, I told it very loud and clear. He stood a yard in front of me, listening to me with an expression of ecstatic joy I have never before or since seen equaled on any face, human or canine He drank it in as though it had been music from Paradise. "Where have I heard that song before?" he seemed to be saying to himself,—"the old familiar language they used to talk to me when I was young." He approached nearer to me; there were almost tears in his eyes when I had finished.

"Say it again!" he seemed to be asking of me. "Oh! say it all over again, the dear old English oaths and curses that in this God-forsaken land I never hoped to hear again." I learned from the young lady that he was an English-born fox-terrier. That explained everything. The foreign dog does not do this sort of thing. The foreigner is born good; that is why we hate him.

THE AMENITIES OF CHEERFUL LYING

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A MAD friend of mine will have it that the characteristic of the age is Make-Believe. He argues that all social intercourse. is founded on make-believe A servant enters to say that Mr. and Mrs. Bore are in the drawing-room. "Oh, d——!" says the man. "Hush!" says the woman. "Shut the door, Susan. How often am I to tell you never to leave the door open?" The man creeps upstairs on tiptoe and shuts himself up in his study. The woman does things before a looking-glass; waits till, by force of will, she feels she is sufficiently mistress of herself not to show her feelings; and then enters the drawing-room with outstretched hands and the look of one welcoming an angel's visit. She says how delighted she is to see the Bores; how good it was of them to come! Why did they not bring more Bores with them? Where is naughty Bore junior? Why does he never come to see her now? She will have to be really angry with him. And sweet little Flossie Bore? Too young to pay calls! Nonsense! An "At Home" day is not worth having where all the Bores are not.

The Bores, who had hoped that she was out, who have only called because the etiquette-book told

them that they must call at least four times in the season, explain how they have been trying and trying to come. "This afternoon," recounts Mrs. Bore, "we were determined to come. 'John, dear,'

"Oh, D——!" says the man. "Hush!" says the woman.

I said this morning, 'I shall go and see dear Mrs. Bounder this afternoon, no matter what happens.'" The idea conveyed is that the Prince of Wales, on calling at the Bores', has been told that he cannot come in. He can call again in the evening, or he can come some other day. This afternoon the Bores are going to enjoy themselves in their own way; they are going to see Mrs. Bounder. "And how is Mr. Bounder?" demands Mrs. Bore. Mrs. Bounder

remains mute for a moment, straining her ears. She can hear him creeping past the door on his way downstairs. She hears the front door softly opened and closed-to. She wakes, as from a dream. She has been thinking of the sorrow that will fall on Bounder when he returns home later and learns what he has missed. And thus it is, not only with the Bores and Bounders, but even with us who are not Bores or Bounders. Society in all ranks is founded on the make-believe that everybody is charming; that we are delighted to see everybody; that everybody is delighted to see us; that it is so good of everybody to come, that we are desolate at the thought that they really must go now. Which would we rather do: stop and finish our cigar, or hasten into the drawing-room to hear Miss Screecher sing? Can you ask us? We tumble over each other in our hurry. Miss Screecher would really rather not sing. But if we insist—we do insist—Miss Screecher, with pretty reluctance, consents. We are careful not to look at one another. We sit with our eyes fixed on the ceiling. Miss Screecher finishes and rises. "But it was so short," we say, as soon as we can be heard above the applause. Is Miss Screecher quite sure that that was the whole of it? Or has she been playing tricks upon us, the naughty lady, defrauding us of a verse? Miss Screecher assures us that the fault is the composer's. But she knows another. At this hint our faces lighten again with gladness: we clamor for more. Our

host's wine is always the most extraordinary we have ever tasted. No, not another glass: we dare not—doctor's orders, very strict. Our host's cigar? We did not know they made such cigars in this

Miss Screecher, with pretty reluctance, consents.

workaday world. No, we really could not smoke another. Well, if he will be so pressing, may we put it in our pocket? The truth is we are not used to high smoking. Our hostess's coffee! Would she confide to us her secret? The baby! We hardly trust ourselves to speak. The usual baby, we have

seen it. As a rule, to be candid, we never could detect much beauty in babies—have always held the usual gush about them to be insincere. But this baby! We are almost on the point of asking them where they got it. It is just the kind we wanted for ourselves. Little Janet's recitation: "A Visit to the Dentist!" Hitherto the amateur reciter has not appealed to us. But this is genius, surely. She ought to be trained for the stage. We plead for the stage—that it may not be deprived of such talent. Every bride is beautiful. Every bride looks charming in a simple costume—for further particulars see paragraph. Every marriage is a cause for universal rejoicing. With our wineglass in our hand we picture the beautiful life we know to be in store for them; how can it be otherwise? She, the daughter of her mother (cheers); he—well, we all know him (more cheers, also involuntary guffaw from ill-regulated young man at end of table, promptly suppressed). We carry our make-believe even into religion. We sit in church, and, in voices swelling with pride, mention to the Almighty, at stated intervals, that we are miserable worms—that there is no good in us. This sort of thing, we gather, is expected of us; it does us no harm and is supposed to please. We make believe that every woman is pure, that every man is honest—until they insist on forcing us, against our will, to observe that they are not. Then we become angry with them and explain to them that they, being sinners, are not folk fit to

mix with us perfect people. Our grief when our rich aunt dies is hardly to be borne. Drapers make fortunes helping us to feebly express our desolation. Our only consolation is that she has gone to a better world. Everybody goes to a better world when they have got all they can out of this one. We stand around the open grave and tell each other so. The clergyman is so assured of it that, to save time, they have written out the formula for him and had it printed in a little book. As a child it used to surprise me—this fact that everybody went to heaven. Thinking of all the people that had died, I pictured the place as overcrowded. Almost I felt sorry for the Devil, nobody ever coming his way, so to speak. I saw him in imagination, a lonely old gentleman, sitting at his gate day after day, hoping against hope, muttering to himself, maybe, that it seemed hardly worth while, from his point of view, keeping the show open. An old nurse whom I once took into my confidence was sure, if I continued talking in this sort of way, that he would get me anyhow. I must have been an evil-hearted youngster: the thought of how he would welcome me, the only human being he had seen for years, had a certain fascination for me: for once in my existence I should be made a fuss about. At every public meeting the chief speaker is always a "jolly good fellow." The man from Mars, reading our newspapers, would be convinced that every member of Parliament was a jovial, kindly, big-hearted, generous-souled saint,

with just sufficient humanity in him to prevent the angels from carrying him off bodily. Do not the entire audience, moved by one common impulse, declare him three times running and in stentorian voice to be this "jolly good fellow"? So say all of them. We have always listened with the most intense pleasure to the brilliant speech of our friend who has just sat down. When you thought we were yawning we were drinking in his eloquence with open-mouthed admiration. The higher one ascends in the social scale the wider becomes this necessary base of make-believe. When anything sad happens to a very big person, the lesser people around him hardly care to go on living. Seeing that the world is somewhat overstocked with persons of importance, and that something or other generally is happening to them, one wonders sometimes how it is the world continues to exist. Once upon a time there occurred an illness to a certain good and great man. I read in my daily paper that the whole nation was plunged in grief. People dining in public restaurants, on being told the news by the waiter, dropped their heads upon the table and sobbed. Strangers, meeting in the street, flung their arms about one another and cried like little children. I was abroad at the time, but on the point of returning home. I almost felt ashamed to go. I looked at myself in the glass and was shocked at my own appearance; it was that of a man who had not been in trouble for weeks. I felt that to burst upon this grief-stricken nation with

a countenance such as mine would be to add to their sorrow. It was borne in upon me that I must be a shallow, egotistical nature. I had had luck with a play in America, and for the life of me I could not look grief-stricken. There were moments when, if I was not keeping a watch upon myself, I found myself whistling. Had it been possible I would have remained abroad till some stroke of ill fortune had rendered me more in tune with my fellow countrymen. But business was pressing. The first man I talked to on Dover Pier was a custom house official. You might have thought sorrow would have made him indifferent to a mere matter of forty-eight cigars. Instead of which he appeared quite pleased when he found them. He demanded three and fourpence and chuckled when he got it. On Dover platform a little girl laughed because a lady dropped a bandbox on a dog: but then children are always callous—or, perhaps, she had not heard the news. What astonished me most, however, was to find in the railway carriage a respectable-looking man reading a comic journal. True, he did not laugh much: he had got decency enough for that; but what was a grief-stricken citizen doing with a comic journal, anyhow? Before I had been in London an hour I had come to the conclusion that we English must be a people of wonderful self-control. The day before, according to the newspapers, the whole country was in serious danger of pining away and dying of a broken heart. In one day the nation had

pulled itself together. "We have cried all day," they had said to themselves, "we have cried all night. It does not seem to have done much good. Now let us once again take up the burden of life." Some of them—I noticed it in the hotel dining-room that evening—were taking quite kindly to their food

To find a respectable-looking man reading a comic journal.

again. Our amusements are all founded on make-believe. We stand about solemnly in the middle of a field, our hands upon our knees. Our object is to prevent another man from running up and down be-

tween two row of sticks. If we catch the ball he has hit toward us with a bit of wood, he has to pretend that he cannot run any more, but must go home and take his clothes off. We make-believe we want to catch a fox. As a matter of fact we have not the slightest use for the fox. We make-believe about quite serious things. In war, each country's soldiers are always the most courageous in the world. The other country's soldiers are always treacherous and tricky; that is why they sometimes win. Our governments are supposed to be founded on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, and spend most of our taxes on making arrangements to quarrel successfully with our enemies. Literature is the art of make-believe. "Now, all of you sit round and throw your pennies in the cap," says the author, "and I will pretend that there lives in Bayswater a young lady named Angelina, who is the most beautiful young lady that ever lived. And in Notting Hill, we will pretend, there resided a young man named Edwin, who is in love with Angelina." And then, there being sufficient pennies in the cap, the author starts away, and pretends that Angelina thought this and said that, and that Edwin did all sorts of wonderful things. We know he is making it all up as he goes along. We know he is making up just what he thinks will please us. He, on the other hand, has to make-believe that he is doing it because he cannot help it, he being an artist. Though we know well enough that, were we to stop throw-

ing the pennies into the cap, he would find out precious soon that he could. The theatrical manager bangs his drum. "Walk up! Walk up!" he cries, "we are going to pretend that Mrs. Johnson is a princess, and old man Johnson is going to pretend to be a pirate. Walk up, walk up, and be in time!" So Mrs. Johnson, pretending to be a princess, comes out of a wobbly thing that we agree to pretend is a castle; and old man Johnson, pretending to be a pirate, is pushed up and down on another wobbly thing that we agree to pretend is the ocean. Mrs. Johnson pretends to be in love with him, which we know she is not. And Johnson pretends to be a very terrible person; and Mrs. Johnson pretends, till eleven o'clock, to believe it. And we pay prices varying from a shilling to half a sovereign to sit for two hours and listen to him. But, as I explained at the beginning, my friend is a mad sort of person.

WAITERS I HAVE KNOWN

WAITERS I HAVE KNOWN

THE slowest waiter I know is the British railway refreshment-room waiter. His very breathing, regular, harmonious, penetrating, instinct as it is with all the better attributes of a well-preserved grandfather's clock, conveys a suggestion of dignity and peace. He is a huge, impressive person. There emanates from him an atmosphere of Lotos-land. The otherwise unattractive room becomes an oasis of repose amid the turmoil of a fretful world. All things conspire to aid him; the ancient joints, ranged side by side like corpses in a morgue, each one decently hidden under its white muslin shroud, whispering of death and decay; the dish of dead flies, thoughtfully placed in the centre of the table; the framed advertisements, extolling the virtues of heavy beers and stouts, of weird champagnes, emanating from haunted-looking *châteaux*, situate—if one may judge from the illustration—in the midst of desert lands; the sleep-inviting buzz of bluebottles. The spirit of the place steals over you. Your idea on entering, with a quarter of an hour to spare, was a cutlet and a glass of claret. In the face of the refreshment-room waiter the notion appears frivolous, not to say un-English. You order cold beef and pickles, with a

pint of bitter in a tankard. To win the British waiter's approval you must always order beer in a tankard. The British waiter, in his ideas, is mediæval. There is a Shakespearean touch about the

There emanates from him an atmosphere of Lotus-land.

tankard. A soapy potato will, of course, be added. Afterward a ton of cheese and a basin of rabbit's-food floating in water (the British salad) will be placed before you. You will work steadily through the whole, anticipating the somnolence that will subsequently fall upon you with a certain amount of satisfaction. It will serve to dispel the last lingering

regret at the reflection that you will miss your appointment and thereby suffer serious inconvenience if not positive loss. These things are of the world —the noisy, tiresome world you have left without.

To the English traveller, the foreign waiter, in the earlier stages of his career, is a burden and a trial. When he is complete—when he really can talk English—I rejoice in him. When I object to him is when his English is worse than my French or German, and when he will, for his own educational purposes, insist, nevertheless, that the conversation shall be entirely in English. I would rather he came to me some other time. I would so much rather make it after dinner—or say half an hour next morning. I hate giving lessons during meal times. Besides, to a man with feeble digestion, this sort of thing can lead to trouble. One waiter I met at a hotel in Dijon knew very little English—about as much as a poll parrot. The moment I entered the *salle à manger* he started to his feet. "Ah! You English!" he cried. "Well, what about us?" I answered. It was during the period of the Boer war. I took it he was about to denounce the English nation generally. I was looking for something to throw at him. "You English—you Englishman, yes?" he repeated, and then I understood that he merely intended a question. I owned up that I was, and accused him of being a Frenchman. He admitted it. Introductions, as it were, thus over, I thought I would order dinner. I ordered it in

French. I am not bragging of my French; I never wanted to learn French. Even as a boy, it was more the idea of others than of myself. I have learned as little as possible; but I have learned enough to live in places where they can't or won't talk anything else. Left to myself, I could have enjoyed a very satisfactory dinner. I was tired with a long day's journey, and hungry. They cook well at this hotel; I had been looking forward to my dinner for hours and hours. I had sat down in my imagination to a *consommé bisque, sole au gratin,* a *poulet sauté,* and an *omelette au fromage.* It is wrong to let one's mind dwell upon carnal delights—I see that now. At the time I was mad about it. The fool would not even listen to me. He had got it into his garlic-sodden brain that all Englishmen live on beef, and nothing but beef. He swept aside all my suggestions as though they had been the prattlings of a foolish child. "You haf nice biftek. Not at all done. Yes?"—"No, I don't," I answered. "I don't want what the cook of a provincial French hotel calls a biftek. I want something to eat. I want——" Apparently he understood neither English nor French. "Yes, yes," he continued cheerfully, "with pottitoes."—"With what?" I said. I thought for the moment he was suggesting potted pigs' feet in the nearest English he could get to it. "Pottitoe," he repeated, "boil pottitoe. Yes? And pell hell." I felt like telling him to go there. I suppose he meant "pale ale." It took me about five

minutes to get that beefsteak out of his head. By the time I had done it I did not care what I had for dinner. I took *pot-du-jour* and veal. He added, on his own initiative, a thing that looked like a poultice. I did not try the taste of it. He explained it was "plum poodin." I fancy he had made it himself. This fellow is typical; you meet him everywhere abroad. He translates your bill into English for you, calls ten centimes a penny, calculates twelve francs to the pound, and presses a handful of sous affectionately upon you as change for a napoleon.

The cheating waiter is common to all countries, though in Italy and Belgium he flourishes, perhaps, more than elsewhere. But the British waiter, when he is detected, becomes surly—does not take it nicely. The foreign waiter is amiable about it—bears no malice whatever. He is grieved, maybe, at your language, but that is because he is thinking of you—the possible effect of it upon your future. To try and stop you, he offers you another four sous. The story is told of a Frenchman who, not knowing the legal fare, adopted the plan of doling out pennies to a London cabman one at a time until the man looked satisfied. Myself I doubt the story. From what I know of the London cabman I can see him leaning down still, with outstretched hand, the horse between the shafts long since dead, the cab chock full of coppers, and yet no expression of satiety upon that cabman's face. But the story would appear to

have crossed the Channel, and to have commended itself to the foreign waiter; especially to the railway refreshment-room waiter. He doles out centimes to the traveller, one at a time, with the air of a man who is giving away the savings of a lifetime. If, after five minutes or so, you still appear discon-

Doling out pennies one at a time, until the cabman looked satisfied.

tented, he goes away quite suddenly. You think he has gone to open another chest of halfpence, but when a quarter of an hour has passed and he does not reappear, you inquire about him among the other

waiters. A gloom at once falls upon them. You have spoken of the very thing that had been troubling them. He used to be a waiter here once—one might almost say until quite recently. As to what has become of him, ah! there you have them. If in the course of their checkered career they ever come across him, they will mention to him that you

Meanwhile, a stentorian-voiced official is shouting that your train is on the point of leaving.

are waiting for him. Meanwhile a stentorian-voiced official is shouting that your train is on the point of leaving. You console yourself with the reflection that it might have been more. It always might have been more; sometimes it is.

A waiter at the Gare du Nord in Brussels on one occasion pressed upon me a five-franc piece, a small Turkish coin the value of which was unknown to me and remains so to this day, a distinctly bad two francs, and from a quarter of a pound to six ounces of centimes, as change for a twenty-franc note, after deducting the price of a cup of coffee. He put it down with the air of one subscribing to a charity. We looked at one another. I suppose I must have conveyed to him the impression of being discontented. He drew a purse from his pocket. The action suggested that, for the purpose of satisfying my inordinate demands, he would be compelled to draw upon his private resources; but it did not move me. Abstracting reluctantly a fifty-centime piece he added it to the heap upon the table. I suggested his taking a seat, as at this rate it seemed likely we should be doing business together for some time. I think he gathered I was not a fool. Hitherto he had been judging, I suppose, purely from appearances. But he was not in the least offended. "Ah," he cried, with a cheery laugh, "Monsieur comprehend!" He swept the whole nonsense back into his bag and gave me the right change. I slipped my arm through his and insisted upon the pleasure of his society until I had examined each and every coin. He went away chuckling and told another waiter all about it. They both of them bowed to me as I went out, and wished me a pleasant journey. I left them still chuckling. A British

waiter would have been sulky all the afternoon. The waiter who insists upon mistaking you for the heir of all the Rothschilds used to cost me dear when I was younger. I find the best plan is to take him in hand at the beginning and disillusion him. He sighs when you sweep aside his talk of '84 Perrier Jouet, followed by '79 Chateau Lafitte, and ask him if, as man to man, he can conscientiously recommend the Saint Julien at two-and-six. But the fault is not yours. Your aristocratic bearing has deceived him. You are not to be blamed for possessing an aristocratic bearing.

The fatherly waiter is sometimes a comfort. You feel that he knows best. Your instinct is to address him as "Uncle." But you remember yourself in time. When you are dining a lady and wish to appear important, he is apt to be in the way. It seems, somehow, to be his dinner. You have a sense almost of being *de trop*. The ascetic waiter is a distinct damper. He is an intellectual-looking man. At the bottom of my heart I agree with him. There is, when you come to think of it, something very gross, very animal, in these prolonged gorges of food and drink. Why don't we live plainer and think higher? But he is out of place in a restaurant.

The greatest insult you can offer a waiter is to mistake him for your waiter. You think he is your waiter—there is the bald head, the black side whiskers, the Roman nose. But your waiter had blue eyes, this man soft hazel. You had forgotten to

notice the eyes. You bar his progress and ask him for the red pepper. The haughty contempt with which he regards you is painful to bear. It is as if you had insulted a lady. He appears to be saying the same thing: "I think you have made a mistake. You are possibly confusing me with somebody else; I have not the honor of your acquaintance." I do not wish it to be understood that I am in the habit of insulting ladies, but occasionally I have made an innocent mistake, and have met with some such response. The wrong waiter conveys to me precisely the same feeling of humiliation. "I will send your waiter to you," he answers. His tone implies that there are waiters and waiters: some may not mind what class of persons they serve; others, though poor, have their self-respect. It is clear to you now why your waiter is keeping away from you; the man is ashamed of being your waiter. He is watching probably for an opportunity to approach you when nobody is looking. The other waiter finds him for you. He was hiding behind a screen. "Table forty-two wants you," the other waiter tells him. The tone of voice adds, "If you like to encourage this class of customer, that's your business, but don't ask me to have anything to do with him, that's all!"

Even the waiter has his feelings.

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